■ BUSINESS / B1
Stocks hit highest levels since '99 due to RP's better fiscal picture

■ SPORTS / A30
Guidicelli in explosive Shell Superkarting comeback

■ METRO / A25
P7.5M in shabu seized from Quiapo drug den; 6 suspects arrested

■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1
Martin Nievera not happy about diminished role in TV's ASAP

Anakpawis leader tags Army man in ambush

By Tonette Orejas and Norbert Jusquin
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SHOT AT LEAST 14 TIMES IN AN AMBUSH THAT killed her wife and a son, a provincial leader of the Anakpawis party-list group told investigators that he recognized one of his attackers as an Army intelligence agent, police sources said yesterday.

Immediately, the military and the police challenged militant groups to back their accusations.

ANAKPAWIS, A23

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, March 22, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 184 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Imelda in PowerPoint gives illusion of making sense

AT 77, THE WIDOW MELDA Marcos is still as large as life, hoping a bit at the edges but bravely maintaining the peculiar frantic dignity that has always set her apart from the rest of us, who might be labeled ordinary.

"I've had the best-best

IMELDA, A3

Puno to run gov't 'jueteng'

Small Town Lottery has same system as illegal numbers game

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christian V. Esguerra and Tarra V. Quismundo

INTERIOR SECRETARY Ronaldo Puno will take charge of the Small Town Lottery (STL) project being bankrolled by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to replace the illegal numbers game "jueteng," Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said STL was being suspended temporarily because the PCSO and Pidurian Mayor Edward Hagedorn, head of the National Anti-Jueteng Task Force, did not advise Puno about STL's implementation.

"They cannot implement this project without the full cooperation of the local government and the police," Defensor said.

The new role that Malacañang has given Puno, who was allegedly involved in backroom operations during the election campaigns of former President Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada and President Macapagal-Arroyo, could be related to administration efforts to raise slush funds and to amend the Constitution, according to two opposition senators.

Having Puno implement STL "is like assigning a fox to guard the chicken coop," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said.

Asked what could be behind

PUNO, A11

GMA rues her liason with Reds

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo regrets her liaison with leaders of militant groups who plotted to unseat then President Joseph Estrada in 2000 but are now linked in efforts to oust her, according to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunyo.

"President Arroyo does not deny having met with leaders of various political persuasions in the run-up to Edsa II. She was the constitutional successor at the time when President Estrada was threatened by massive people power and she had to try to consolidate the nation at a time of grave national necessity, which she did," Bunyo said in a statement.

Malacañang issued the statement in reaction to charges by Bayan Muna Representatives

GMA RUES, A13

WALKING THE TALK. Between columns along a corridor of Malacañan Hall, President Arroyo chats with someone after her regular round-table discussion in the press briefing room. (PHOTO BY JOAN BONDOC)

Moment of truth: Erap on the dock

THE TRIAL DEFENSE witness today is the defendant himself, former President Joseph Estrada.

By Nelson Flores

FIVE YEARS AFTER HIS OUSTER on charges of plunder, Joseph Estrada will finally have his day in court.

Unlike the macho, swashbuckling roles that catapulted him to stardom and later to the presidential Palace, Estrada's appearance at the Sandiganbayan today will be subdued.

There will be no TV cameras in the courtroom when the ousted President confronts charges that, if proved, will either result in jail for life or death by lethal injection. (See specific charges vs Estrada on Page A9.)

The Sandiganbayan has refused to grant the request of Estrada that his appearance be televised, just like his riveting impeachment trial that captivated the nation and led to his ouster in a People Power revolt in January 2001.

"There will be nothing extraordinary in my testimony because I only have to tell the truth," Estrada told The Associated Press by telephone yesterday. "I'm confident that history will vindicate me from those charges by a conspiracy of the elite, church leaders and thieving politicians." (See Estrada's

MOMENT, A9

Cheap rice, medicine offered to anti-GMA bishops' parishes

By Christian V. Esguerra

AT A TIME WHEN PEOPLE ARE GRUMBLING about soaring prices, who can argue with offers of cheap rice? Some people can.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is quietly dangling a refunded poverty-alleviation program to several dioceses in an effort seen by one Roman Catholic bishop as her way of courting a sector of the Church famously critical of her administration.

The program offers cheap rice and low-cost medicine to some of the poorest parishes in the country, according to a letter sent out by the Office of Religious Affairs under the President. A copy of the letter was obtained by the Inquirer over the weekend.

News of the Malacañang project followed Ms Arroyo's visits to four bishops last week.

Among those who had Ms Arroyo as a high-profile guest was Bishop Arturo Bastos of Sorsogon.

CHEAP, A9

MEDIA GROUPS announce that they have filed an urgent motion in the Court of Appeals. The petitioners include (from left) Sheila Coronel, Jose Manuel Diokno, Maria Ressa, Ed Lingao and Theodore Te. (Story on Page A2.)

Czech envoy translates Rizal masterpiece

PLACE OF HONOR in Intramuros for the Czech's "Mi Ultimo Adios" with proud author Czech envoy to RP Jaroslav Ludva.

By Veli Contreras

"MI ULTIMO ADIOS (My Last Farewell)," the timeless poem written by national hero Jose Rizal while awaiting his execution in 1896, was unveiled Monday night at Rizal Shrine in Intramuros—in Czech.

This latest of many versions was penned by self-confessed "ship poet" and now the Czech Republic's Ambassador to the Philippines Jaroslav Ludva.

The gesture was in celebration of what historians now consider as the immortal friendship between Rizal and his Czech friend Prof. Ferdinand Blumentritt, then a school principal in the town of Litomerice, in what is now the Czech Republic.

Blumentritt (1853-1913) is credited with, among other things, convincing Rizal to overcome his doubts about publishing "Noli Me Tangere" and "El Filibusterismo"—two books that would stoke the flames of the Philippine revolt against Spain.

On the eve of his death, Rizal secretly wrote two pieces: "Ultimo" and a last letter to Blumentritt, his Czech "soul mate," Ludva stated.

To mark the bond between the two men—Blumentritt never came to the Philippines but corresponded with Rizal for a long time—the national hero's native town of Calamba, Laguna, and Litomerice were declared "sister cities" in 1974.

Litomerice has since built four monuments to Rizal, including a bust in City Hall, while one street in Manila has been named in honor of Blumentritt.

But while Monday's presentation

CZECH, A7

Cardinal Rosales' true color is green

By Blanche S. Rivera

CAUDENCIO CARDINAL ROSales will show his true colors when he comes back from the Vatican with his red hat—and the country will know it's green.

The Philippines' newest cardinal and head of the powerful Archdiocese of Manila will lead the celebration of Earth Day in the Philippines next month, taking up cross again on advocacy he was known for as a bishop in Mindanao nearly three decades ago.

"He readily said yes when we asked him to head the Earth Day celebration. He's very excited about it," Mother Earth Philippines founding member Odette Alcantara told the Inquirer yesterday.

It is the first time that the Church has taken a leading role in the environmental event, first celebrated in the country six years ago.

This year's theme, "Mea Culpa: A Call for Repentance and Atonement," will be its biggest and most sober celebration, Alcantara said.

Rosales joins a very respectable team of national conveners for Earth Day, including former First Lady Amelita Ramos, former Senate President Jovito Salonga, veteran journalist Eugenia Duran-Apostol, Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn

CARDINAL, A6

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Finally, Comelec steps into bitter LP dispute

By Jaymee Aning

AFTER SHOWING INITIAL HESITATION, the Commission on Elections has decided to step into a bitter dispute that has split the 60-year-old Liberal Party into two factions, one supporting the embattled President Macapagal-Arroyo and the other demanding her resignation.

The Comelec yesterday directed Manila Mayor Lito Atienda, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and 11 others to comment on a letter by Senate President Franklin Drilon asking the poll body to declare illegal a March 2 meeting during which Atienda and his followers named Drilon as party president.

Atienda, LP national chair, was voted party president in the place of Drilon while Defensor was elected chair during the meeting, which Drilon denounced as a rump session engineered by Malacañang. Mr Arroyo showed up at the meeting after Atienda and Defensor's relatives.

The body's two-page directive gave the Atienda faction 10 days to file their comments. The order was signed by Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra, Florentino Tuason Jr. and Romeo Brawner.

In his March 3 petition to the Comelec, Drilon maintained that he was still the lawful LP president and asked the poll body to nullify the election organized by the Atienda wing and stop the leaders of the splinter group from representing themselves as LP officials.

Drilon said the election was illegal and violated party rules. On May 15, he announced the expulsion of Atienda, Defensor and other LP stalwarts who sided with the mayor.

'Internal matter'

Four days earlier, the Atienda camp submitted to Comelec a list of the "newly elected" national officers as well as minutes of the "LP London National Assembly."

Drilon had earlier described the LP dispute as an "internal matter" and said that Comelec could not intervene. He added that as far as he was concerned, Drilon was still the legitimate LP president based on the commission's documents.

However, he pointed out that the quarrel should be resolved to facilitate accreditation of official LP candidates and determine which group would be given copies of election returns.

The Liberal Party is a member of Mr Arroyo's coalition but was split after Drilon and other party leaders called for the President's resignation during a July 8 meeting on charges she cheated in the 2004 presidential election. Although Defensor was at the meeting, Atienda was absent and called the decision to withdraw support from Mr Arroyo illegal.

Atienda himself is scheduled to preside over a meeting today of the party's National Executive Council (NEC), which Drilon claims is illegal because only he, as party president, can convene the body. With Tina G. Santos

Media press CA on 1017

By Armand N. Nocum

MEDIA GROUPS HAVE ASKED the Court of Appeals to immediately schedule a hearing on their petition to stop the government from imposing "prior restraint" on their work, even as their lawyers lamented as opposed to the CA justices were treating the issue like "a legal hot potato."

In an urgent motion filed in the appellate court, the petitioners said that after they filed their petition two weeks ago, the administration has "proclaimed" its "fervent and thinly veiled threats against the press; only this time the attacks are becoming more and more virulent, and more ominous."

They asked the court to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) or preliminary injunction against Malacañang and the police to stop them from censoring the media.

In their seven-page motion, they cited several incidents that indicated the administration had an intention of leaving the media alone even after the state of national emergency had been lifted.

The incidents included attempts to secure a search warrant against the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, one of the petitioners; Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor's claims that lawsuits were being planned against two media personalities, and the closure of Rodney Peckscheit's radio show were daily.

Likewise, they cited a March 20 report from the intelligence community linking an Inquirer editor and senior reporter to a suspected coup financier.

"The foregoing acts, coming within days of each other and without letup, show a deliberate pattern by the government to muzzle the press and gag protected speech," the petitioners said.

The petitioners, aside from PCIJ, included the Philippine Press Institute, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, Newsbreak, Pinoy Professionals, Center for Community Journalism and Development, and ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs.

In a press briefing, the petitioners' lawyers also said they were concerned about indications the CA decision had become "a legal hot potato," pointing out that two weeks after the petition was filed, the CA had yet to issue a resolution.

"Even the reason for the transfer of the petition from the CA's 16th Division to where it was originally raffled to its fifteenth Division) was not explained to us," lawyer Theodore Te said.

Unconfirmed reports said the appellate court had already turned down the petition due to technical frailties, including the petitioners' failure to include a certification on non-forum shopping.

"We have not received a copy of the supposed resolution, although I would like to point out that we included all the required certifications in our petition," said another lawyer, Jose Manuel Diokno.

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Senate tells House it takes 2 to Cha-cha, vows boycott of rump assembly

AFTER UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVING to tell the House of Representatives that it need go it alone on Charter change, senators yesterday expressed hopes any "rump" constituent assembly that will be called by congressmen to amend the Constitution

"That (boycott) seems to be a given under the circumstances because the presence of senators would be an indication of a divided Senate," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. told reporters after 21 senators signed a resolution telling House members they can't constitute a constituent assembly by themselves.

"I don't think anybody will go against the intention of (the resolution)."

The resolution, initiated by Senate President Franklin Drilon, expresses the sense of the Senate that any proposed amendment or revision of the 1987 Constitution requires the approval of both chambers, voting separately.

Only Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., who is in the United States, did not sign the resolution but he soon would be on it.

The resolution came on the heels of claims by House leaders that they were close to gathering 195 signatures to support a resolution to amend the Constitution by convening Congress into a constituent assembly. (Alberto

Correction

In THE ARTICLE, "Cavite coffee industry gets brewing," that appeared on Page B4 of the March 10 issue, the name of the chief executive officer of Figaro Coffee Corp. was misstated. It is Pedro Juan, not Pedro Jose Juan.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Desk Ombudsman, Philippine Daily Inquirer 5th Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax this 897-87-03/04, e-mail address: dyuson@inquirer.com.ph. Complainants must first call Inquirer at telephone nos. 896-6000 local 4301 to 4306, Antipolo Area, 477-7777, Bacolod, 433-7777, Baguio, 442-4444, Batangas, 723-2222, Cagayan de Oro, 726-4444, Cebu, 253-8000, Dagupan, 522-8888, Davao, 221-7777, Iloilo, 329-3333, Laguna, 549-0000, Lucena, 710-1111, Naga, 473-2222, Pampanga, 961-6666, Tacloban, 321-2222, Zamboanga, 991-1111, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax this 897-87-89/94, Attn: Reader's Advocate, for phone number 897-6000 local 342.

Zuce has served his purpose for impeachment, says Zamora

By Norman Bordadora

MICHELANGELO ZUCE HAS SERVED his purpose as far as the opposition's campaign to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo was concerned.

San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora yesterday said Zuce had fed the opposition to generate who had participated in the network's alleged payroll of local election officials in his Quezon City stronghold just before the May 2004 polls.

"We never planned to use him (as a witness in the impeachment complaint). If you will remember, he was a witness for the 'jueteng' inquiry in the Senate. What he said led us to other witnesses who were actual participants," Zamora told the Inquirer.

Zamora had headed the opposition impeachment team in the House of Representatives last year when the complaint against President Arroyo was thrown out by the administration's allies.

Zuce, a former Malacañang operative working under presidential political liaison Jose Solis, had testified in a Senate inquiry into jueteng, the illegal numbers game, that he was present when Mr. Arroyo met with election officials at her home and appealed for their help. As soon as she left, Zuce had said, the order of a suspected jueteng lord distributed P80,000 each to the poll officials.

The other day, Zuce testified as a member of the government's anti-jueteng task force in connection with the implementation of the Small Town Lottery (STL), the legalized form of jueteng.

Antijueteng czar Pierre Princess Bikit Schmidt Dagohoy on Monday announced the 30-year-old Zuce had volunteered his services.

Malacañang, however, denied any hand in Zuce's return to the government fold.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said yesterday Zuce was neither paid nor did the Palace initiate the move to get him back.

Radio reports yesterday said another jueteng witness, Wilfredo "Boy" Mayor, had also become disgruntled with his handlers.

Like Zuce, Mayor admitted he had regrets about coming out but was mad testifying to the Senate jueteng investigation.

But like regrets, he said, were linked to the senators' failure to keep their promise to help him financially.

Unlike Zuce, he said, he would never jump in the government side.

Manila Water

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of **MANILA WATER COMPANY, INC.**, ("Manila Water") will be held at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City, on Monday, April 3, 2006, at 9:00 A.M., with the following

AGENDA

1. Determination of quorum
2. Approval of Minutes of the Stockholders' Meeting on May 12, 2005
3. Notation of Manila Water's 2005 Annual Report and approval of its audited Financial Statements as of December 31, 2005 incorporated in said Annual Report
4. Ratification of all acts and resolutions during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Management Committees and Officers of Manila Water
5. Election of 11 members of the Board of Directors
6. Election of External Auditor
7. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting
8. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record as of March 3, 2006 will be entitled to notice and to vote at this meeting. For this purpose, the Stock and Transfer Book of Manila Water will be closed from March 3, 2006 to April 3, 2006.

The Annual Stockholders' Meeting will be followed by an Organizational Meeting of the newly elected Board of Directors for the election/ appointment of the principal officers of Manila Water and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Makati, Quezon City, February 24, 2006.

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"INCOMPREHENSIBLE" Power Point presentation of her "tangled philosophy of life," writes the New York Times of the still news-grabbing Imelda Marcos. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Imelda . . .

From page A1

and the warm ocean ozone," she said to an interviewer in her apartment, with its golden upholstery, its old Marcos-era paintings, its rumble-id framed photographs and its bushels of artificial flowers.

In the 20 years since she and her husband, President Ferdinand E. Marcos, were driven into exile and disgrace by something called People Power, she has consolidated her tangled philosophy of life into a neatly incomprehensible Power Point presentation.

During the interview, she pointed a tiny pistol straight ahead and a red laser dot appeared on a screen in the middle of a heart-shaped face labeled "Happy."

The dot moved sideways to a trembling upside-down heart marked "Sad," and then to a fractured circle called "Paranoia," a symbol of aggressive consumption. The story of her life.

"You put it all together," she said hopefully, aiming now at a shape that looked a bit like a flower, "no-upright hours, no-upside down hours, and what you get is peace. Peace and freedom."

Her voice was inscrutable. It gave the illusion of making sense.

"Beauty is God made real," she said, and, "The opposite of love is not hate, it is selfishness," and, "The only things we keep are those we give away" and, "Ultimate status is ultimate in all."

She led you through it as often that it gave her relentless mind a chance to rest, and look she and her frenemy followed the peregrinations of the red dot half asleep.

"The Seven Pillars to Moral Regeneration—ecological order; human order; economic order; social order; moral order; cosmic order; peace and order."

Plastic jewelry

Her mind wandered and she touched her fingers to a very large yellow brooch pinned to what seemed to be a well-worn blue dress.

"Plastic," she said.

This remark was met with surprise.

"I don't wear jewels anymore," she announced. "They stole all my jewels. These are recycled gas bags—but I make nice jewelry."

Last year, the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was set to auction off the Marcos jewelry collection composed of pieces from the world's foremost jewelers like Bulgari, Cartier and Harry Winston, but the auction first lady went to court to stop the sale.

Her emeralds and rubies were in other people's hands now, still seeming to exert the magnetic power of wealth that seduced Imelda Marcos and her husband, who died in exile in Hawaii in 1989.

The lawyers earlier reported that the former first lady might be able to recover some, if not all, of her fabulous jewelry if the PCGG would push through with a plan to strike a compromise with her.

PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said that an out-of-court settlement on the jewelry, estimated to be worth $20 million, would be a good one in the government's attempt to fast-track the recovery of the Marcos' ill-gotten wealth.

Reveal true value

But Senate Minority Leader Aquilino "Nene" Q. Pimentel Jr. said it would be unwise for the government to forge an out-of-court settlement with the Marcos family if they "refuse to reveal the value of the assets that are under their possession and control." (Related story on Page A13.)

Pimentel also rejected a reported plan of the PCGG to allow the Marcoses to keep 10 percent of the plundered wealth because it would be "fooling and cajoling us to accept to be satisfied, considering the length of time the Marcoses and their cronies had enjoyed the perks that money could buy."

He suggested that the Marcos family be allowed to retain "only 10 percent of the money."

A special place

Today Marcos continues to experience swings of the warm ocean ozone in her life—despite the opulence of her apartment and the social circle she still enjoys.

Since she returned from Hawaii in 1991, she has been fending off court cases—at one point numerously avoiding jail.

Still, the government's lawyers are hounding her. Yet consider Marcos feels put upon.

"Even the Bible says there's a special place in hell for those who oppress widows and orphans," she said. New York Times News Service

Cardinal Rosales' true color is green

From page A1

dent, Italian beauty queen Margie Moran, businessman-host Conrad Conception, noted environmental lawyer Antonio Oposa and Kasalo Conservation Council for Asia.

Rosales said celebrants of Mass, a sacred liturgy for the Integrity of Creation, at the Sinukey Mountain in Tondo on April 22. It will be one of his first big Eucharistic celebrations as cardinal after his thanksgiving Mass on April 5.

He will use a sawed log made from a huge strip of wood on the stump of an old mahogany tree and designed by National Artist Napoleon Abueva.

A symphony of 40 choirs directed by Carmencita Reguia, provincial director of the Union Church of Manila, will be the

strong voices that will echo an equally strong message on environmental protection expected from Rosales.

Paradise Heights

"Sinukey Mountain is the most appropriate, most picturesque manifestation of earth's abuse. It became a national shame . . . [but] now members call a part of it 'Paradise Heights,'" Alyansa said.

The Offertory for the Mass for the Integrity of Creation will include:

- A certificate from De La Salle University bearing its pledge to plant one billion trees to represent reforestation.
- A recycled pocket.
- A tree representing the need for ground cleanup.
- A design for an eco-village.
- Seven flags representing an eco-friendly ambiance.
- The book "Legal Arsenal for Our Environment" by Antonio Oposa and a copy of Republic Act No. 9003 or the ecological Solid Waste Management Act to represent the need for green governance.
- A flask of rose-dimed and a color panel to represent renewable energy.
- Two ceramics for 10,000 seedlings from the Manila Seedling Bank.
- Bread and wine.

280 groups involved

Keith Day Heinrich Philippines, a loose network of some 200 organizations overseeing preparations for Earth Day is launching tonight a 20-day countdown to the big event.

A cultural presentation titled "Himagsikan at Pasasa Ang Isang Kalikasan" will kick off the countdown at 5 p.m. at the Barangay ng mga Bayani in Quezon City.

The women's group Alumni Pinay will also hold a recyclers Mass for some 40 of its members who died in the mudslide in Southern Leyte last month.

"It's the first time we're doing a countdown to heighten environmental awareness," Ingay Ong, Movement director Mich Atienza said.

The 20-day countdown will have 200 events for Earth Day in the business community. The fun will highlight organic and recycled materials and alternative livelihoods from solid waste management.

There will also be the annual Bicol parade from Intramuros to Mandaluyong City up the Pasig River, a signature campaign against mining and logging, and the Lasso on Kalikasan awards.

Not just blame game

Alyansa said the call for repentance and nonviolent tasks to assist in all sectors—the government, media, Church, industry, schools, families and even the armed forces—the need to come for the environment.

"It [environmental degradation] is not just a blame game. Not everything is the fault of the government. ... It's a collective fault because we're stewards of creation," she said.

Alyansa described the idea of the Church leading the year's Earth Day celebration in Rosales like one first for the first time on Jan. 15 during the Feast of the Sto. Niño of Sinukey Mountain.

Iconic

Sitting across from the archbishop during lunch, Alyansa simply blurted out, "Wouldn't it be a good idea if the Church led the Earth Day celebration this year, knowing you are an environmentalist?"

Rosales immediately said, "Yeah," and assigned Sinukey Mountain parish priest Fr. Ben Beltran as the point person between himself and Earth Day Network.

"He said he was so glad that there were now groups who spoke his language," Mendoza said of the cardinal. "He is really a great man."

CELEBRATING: "The historical friendship between Jose Rizal and Ferdinand Blumentritt" is an exhibit opened by the Czech Republic's Senate President Premysl Sobotka. He also attended a reading of Rizal's "Mi Ultimo Adios" translated into Czech. Here, Sobotka greets one of Rizal's descendants, Antonio Lopez Rizal, while Senate President Drilon looks on.

Czech envoy translates Rizal's masterpiece

was considered an official gift from the Czech government, it carried more meaning for Ludva.

"I really fell in love with Jose Rizal," the diplomat told the hearers. "A true illustrado in those days, the most famous personality here and beyond this country."

Readings on Rizal

Ludva, who was assigned to Manila in September last year, said he first thought of a Czech translation of "Ultimo" in January.

Before sitting down to write, he read several books on Rizal—including two by Czech authors—which centered on the patriot's final hours as well as his friendship with Blumentritt.

Although he translated the masterpiece from the original Spanish, he also studied the versions in English and German to further distill the heroes "meanings."

One weekend in late January, Ludva decided to send "my wife, my daughter and my mother-in-law to Mindoro, because I needed to be alone for 48 hours," he said.

He was home alone in his Forbes Park residence writing, "and within 40 hours I did it," he said.

'Jewel of romantic poetry'

Ludva said it was "very difficult" to fit images in the poem in his mother tongue since he not only had to find the proper Czech words for Rizal's "rich Spanish vocabulary... but I also wanted to capture his (Rizal's) great sense of drama in that language."

The envoy described "Ultimo" as a "jewel of romantic poetry in fast rolls."

And unless one knows of Rizal's circumstances when he wrote it, the reader could not easily sense clue about the musings of a man locked away from the living squad, Ludva noted.

"You can feel that he was not [sad]. He was upbeat when the hero wrote it. Rizal's message to his closest friends and family was: 'Be happy, life is nice, I will give my life to my country because I want it to prosper in the future. It is my contribution to the next generation,'" he said.

"It was a long poem but it's wonderful and I admire him for that. He was about to be executed yet still he found something deep inside his soul to give to his countrymen," Ludva added.

Place of honor

As inspiring poet in his youth, Ludva said he considered his translation of "Ultimo" as his first "published" work in verse.

"Published" was an understatement, since the Czech version was executed—so what could be considered a piece of history—right next to the original Spanish text on a wall of the Rizal Shrine.

"I have written a lot of poems but I was too shy to publish them because I felt somebody would say it's not right. In those days, I was so devoted to writing poetry. I thought it would be the end of my life if it was not accepted by the public," Ludva said.

"But now I have decided to return to my roots—and be more daring," he said. "I think what I did was not only a must for a Czech ambassador. It was more of a devotion."

From memory

On the night of the unveiling, Ludva apparently thought his two days translating the Rizal verse not enough to honor the hero.

The gregarious diplomat he would give the closing remarks. But he went beyond the usual and surprised everyone by reciting from memory the original Spanish version of "Ultimo."

He delivered all 14 stanzas—each consisting of five lines—to the applause of the gathering that included fellow diplomats, Philippine officials and educators, as well as Rizal's descendants.

Visibly moved were the Filipinos in the audience for here was a foreigner appreciating, and perhaps even outpacing them in memorizing a national literary gem.

The ceremony was geared by Senate President Franklin Drilon, visiting Czech Senate President Premysl Sobotka and National Commission on Culture and the Arts chair Ambeth Ocampo.

"Mi Ultimo Adios" has been translated into 75 foreign languages and 37 Philippine dialects.

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Due to the overwhelming support and response to our message (printed 08 Mar 06), this reprint lists only names; no signature images in order to accommodate the many names.

Email: mahalko_bayanko@yahoo.com

We apologize to those whose names were not listed or may have been misspelled due to glitches in the file transmissions.

Moment of truth: Erap on the dock

(continued from first page)

The charges and his detention have created a "very depressing life," he said, adding that acquittal would correct all the wrongs heaped upon him. "This is a mistake and this should be corrected," he said.

Estrada, 69, said he would assert a motion "bearing" today and speak in Tagalog when he testifies to symbolize his love for the country he once promised to deliver from crushing poverty.

'We historicize'

"There will be no statements, he'll just answer questions propounded by his counsel," said lawyer Raymund Fortun. "There will be no histrionics tomorrow."

Fortun yesterday told foreign correspondents that the defense would try to coax after Estrada's testimony. It is likely that Estrada will make several appearances at the Sandiganbayan, Fortun added, including one in a week.

The court is expected to have a verdict in September or October, Fortun said.

Fortun is just one in a battery of top cubbie lawyers defending Estrada. It includes former Sen. Jose Saguisag, former Supreme Court Chief Justice Andres Narvasa and Justice Secretary Perfecto Laserna.

Estrada will be the 79th witness witness in his trial on the capital charge of plunder that robbed him of power and consigned him to detention in his sprawling rest house in Tanay.

Prosecutors say the former President committed plunder—a nonbailable offense punishable by a maximum penalty of death by lethal injection—by amassing about P4 billion ($77 million) in illegal gambling payoffs, tax kickbacks and commissions stashed away in secret bank accounts.

Estrada also faces a minor charge of perjury for allegedly underreporting his assets in 1999.

Coached on testimony

Today's hearing is historic, according to Fortun[one]. This will be the first time that Estrada will tell his side of the story, the trial lawyer said, reiterating all the evidence against him. The legal defense made Estrada recall all crucial events read by the prosecution.

"We asked him about the testimony of Baron Sy[e] Geo. Lim ("Chavit" Singson and others," said Fortun[one], who will conduct Estrada's direct examination. "We did not have a problem."

He said that part of Estrada's

IN THE KNOW

The issues against Estrada

1. Secret bank accounts

To hide the alleged illegally acquired wealth, Estrada was said to have maintained seven bank accounts, including one in the Equitable PCI Bank where he had over P12 billion under the name Jose Velarde. The sum ordered frozen in August 2001 by the Sandiganbayan. Five other banks subsequently turned over to the Ombudsman statements of Estrada's accounts, as well as of his two mistresses—Guia Gomez and Laarni Enriquez.

2. Excise tax scam

In 1998, Estrada allegedly pocketed the P130 million in excise tax share of Ilocos Sur allocated under RA 7171 (An Act to Promote the Development of Burley as a New Industry in the Virginia Tobacco-Producing Provinces). The amount was allegedly divided among Estrada [P70 million], his wife Nora Luisa "Loi" Ejercito (P20 million), his son Jinggoy (P10 million), and his friend Charlie "Atong" Ang (P10 million).

3. Illegal gambling payoffs

From November 1998 to August 2000, Estrada was said to have collected and received from Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson P545 million derived from the proceeds of illegal jueteng operations in Ilocos and other provinces.

4. Intervention in the stock market

Estrada was accused of preventing then Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto Yasay Jr. to clear the president's friend, Dante Tan, of any wrongdoing in the stock manipulation case against Tan with Far Southeast Gas. And a spectacular 5,000 percent increase in its share price from P2 to P107 a share in a span of eight months ending in October 1999. PDI Research

(CONTINUED ON PAGE A10)

THE SIGNIFICANCE of it is that the plunder trial of ex-President Estrada, which resumes a new high today when he takes the stand today, is the first ever during his tenure that the imposing new Sandiganbayan court structure was inaugurated in 1999. ALEX TAMAYO

Estrada's Statement

The following statement by ousted President Joseph Estrada was released to the press yesterday:

IT HAS BEEN A PERIOD OF EXTREME mental and spiritual anguish as well as emotional strain. For almost five years, I have been denied my liberty and stripped of my honor on the basis of trumped-up charges lodged against me by my political enemies.

There has been no let-up to the constant, and consistent, efforts to vilify me before the Filipino people. The powers that be have used every trick in available arsenal to keep me in detention and to deny my right to free speech.

Ngayon, at muling ay may nanaig ang tinatawag sa katuwiran ay dahan-dahan na akong nakakakita ng liwanag. Nagbibigay ng sulyap ng sikat ng araw ang kalayaang tatahakin ko.

Bagamat I dare not assume beforehand the outcome of the trial, I am confident that I will be exonerated of the charges.

The movie, "Ang Aplik at ang Ayaw" was shown from an overhead projector on a huge screen in front of the St. Peter's Parish where less than 100 people congregated to show support for the deposed President.

"We want to keep Erap's supporters awake during the vigil," said Dennis Hontiz, national vice chair for Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice.

Also present were the vigil were Gregory Alvarez, secretary general of PFJ Mindanao Brigade, and Ben Cuevas of the National Council for Concerned Movements, another PFJ-affiliated group.

Members of the People's Movement Against Poverty and the Muslim group Imadans, and other groups identified with Estrada were present.

The groups in media in front of the church, where they said they would stay until midnight.

Police said they were closely watching the group but had no plan to disperse them unless the group tried to move away from the church and march toward the Sandiganbayan. Erick Espina, Inquirer Southern Luzon bureau; Jeff C. Cabacungan Jr., Luige A. del Puerto, Ed Sig. Ali Reñares

Cheap rice, medicine offered to the poor in anti-GMA bishops' parishes

Bel Pareja yesterday scolded the media for supposedly "reading too much" into the visit.

He said Mr Arroyo came to his diocese only to attend the 50th anniversary of Mgr. Patrocinio Latorre's ordination as a priest. Labayo served as Malolos archbishop from 2000 to 2004.

"We didn't discuss missing or anything at all," Pareja told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

One prelate, an unrelenting adversary whose closeness was heralded a copy of the letter nearly two weeks ago, said on Monday the program targeted the poorest dioceses in the country.

Some of those dioceses are also home to some of the most sensational mining operations which are being opposed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

Palace defends program

"My answer's been answering," the bishop said in the Tagalog. "It's evident that the President is trying to assist us."

The bishop, who comes from the South, asked not to be identified, saying he didn't want his diocese to be the focus of controversy.

Malacañang denied the accusation, saying it had no other motive in its food and medical rehabilitation and other social projects than to address the plight of the poorest of the poor.

Offering cheap rice and medicine isn't really new. The National Food Authority has long been a source of rice priced lower than the ordinary market price. There are also existing "Botika ng Bayan" projects offering cheaper medicine.

Seed money

In the letter signed by Undersecretary Jaime Wells, the Palace asked each diocese to choose five parishes for the rice and medicine programs and to register them with the Office of Religious Affairs.

Each of the parishes will then receive seed money of P15,000 to be used to purchase rice from the NFA. The parish will then sell the rice to parishioners at P18 per kilo, which is lower than the commercial price.

"We were so sure, parishioners will be able to testify during his trial peacefully and we publicly ask his supporters and allies and detractors not to disrupt the trial proceedings even outside the Sandiganbayan," he said.

'Ang Aplik at ang Ayaw'

The bishop have been accused, including prelates with the personal doctor of the ex-President, in case of a medical emergency.

A movie starring both PFJ and Erap kept their supporters awake for last night's vigil on the eve of Estrada's appearance before the Sandiganbayan.

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No dignity

"It breaks the poor, treating them like beggars," he explained. "There's no dignity in doling out cheap rice and medicine to the poor. These things are palliatives."

If Malacañang is really serious about alleviating poverty, it should come up with programs to generate jobs and stable incomes, the bishop said.

Poverty is all over his province, highlighted by a long stretch of unpaved roads, he noted.

Despite the underdevelopment, the bishop said his diocese had one effective program allowing parishioners to borrow specific amounts to start small

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AFP spokesman talking again

CDR. TRISTAN ESCIO IS talking again.

The chief of the Armed Forces public information office yesterday faced reporters covering the defense beat for the first time since he came under fire from lawmakers and political analysts for his comments that the military was holding the nation together.

Escio made no mention of his statements last March 11 when he said the "the nation will collapse" if the military goes in to pressure to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

He also showed no indication that he was offered by the retirees backed against him and the military in general. Yesterday, there was no mention of the remark and the revelations it elicited.

Escio was joined in yesterday's news conference at Camp Aguinaldo by Brig. Gen. Jose Reynaldo who says supposedly as military spokesman last week after the uproar caused by Garcia remarks.

Reyes showed up at the Army's 104th anniversary celebration last Monday after the media reported that Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga had issued a command directive dated March 14 spelling out the military's role in the "crying times."

In it, Senga stated that the military is "not to be regarded as a power political force to be used by politicians in the furtherance of their vested interests."

Senga also stated that the Armed Forces' constitutional role of neutrality as protector of the people and the state "is not a license to curve local leadership of the government from public officials on the basis of perceived imperatives, threats of governance."

"Be reminded, I am loud to make political," said Senga in his directive which was not released to the media until last Saturday.

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Troops curious, not restive, about 'Hello Garci' probe – Esperon

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE TROOPS are not restive but merely "curious" about the unfolding events in the results of the military's investigation into the alleged involvement of some generals in the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal, according to Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

Esperon, one of the generals mentioned in the purported telephone conversations between President Macapagal-Arroyo and ex-election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano on election-rigging operations, said he, too, wanted disclosures of the investigation report submitted by Navy chief Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga to AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga last January.

"I'm excited about it," Esperon said reporters in Fort Bonifacio.

The results have been kept under wraps since the first week of January.

Senga was quoted by Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. who in turn says he will submit it to the President, who would then decide whether to make it public.

Esperon rejected reports there was undercurrent in the ranks because of the involvement of the generals in the alleged election cheating.

"Maybe sentiments is not the... appropriate word because we only the their feelings," Esperon said.

"I just feel that we really need to inform [the] public about what really transpired," he added. "Still everybody curious about [the] information."

Esperon has denied involvement in any election irregularity as did the other generals. He also denied that Marine Brig. Gen. Francisco Emilio Tarlac (ret) last Oct. 41 were enlisted as brigade commander and Task Force Ranao chief during the canvassing of votes in the Lanao provinces allegedly to facilitate the cheating.

"Some people might get restive on that [issue] depending on their personal positions, ... But sentiments is one thing, doing violent actions is connection with that sentiments is another," Esperon said, apparently referring to an alleged plan by some military units to withdraw support from the President last Feb. 24.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon had said that Brig. Gen. Ernesto Lim of the Scout Rangers and Col. Ariel Querubin of the Marines were among the officers who complained to him last July 3 about the lack of investigation then into the military involvement in the "Hello Garci" scandal.

ME. Esperon and the other so-called "Hello Garci" generals were promoted, triggering the military unrest. Biazon said.

Esperon was named Army chief last August. In January, Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon was named chief of the AFP Southern Command while Brig. Gen. Raymundo Tinio Dengo, who headed the battalion at the time of the alleged wiretapping, was named AFP Western Command chief.

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'Bookies' sabotage STL

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—BARELY A month after the government-contracted Small Town Lottery (STL) started operating in Quezon, the numbers game was being sabotaged by "bookies" or illegal betting stations.

Lt. Reynaldo G. Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office Quezon branch manager, said her office was receiving reports that illegal STL betting stations had started to gamble in some parts of the province.

"The police should stop these operations. It is their duty to protect the STL since they take from a make-believe income," Betancourt said.

Before the PCSO clearing system, 30 percent of the net sales of the STL operations will be divided as follows: city or municipal government, 30 percent; provincial government, 5 percent; local police, 5 percent; and each congressional district, 2.5 percent.

The PCSO official acknowledged that she had expected the operations of illegal STL betting stations. "There's already a special task force especially assigned to get rid of them," Betancourt said.

She said that penetrating STL games run by bookies was against the law and it has any bettor or collector for the underground lottery faced arrest.

Several STL sales representatives or "cobradores" have resulted in the loosing due some of their fellow bet takers had been submitting the collected betcard as the official STL station but to the illegal bookies.

"We can't blame them. They receive a much higher commission from the bookies than from the PCSO," said one of the STL employees.

With the proliferation of bookies, STL bet collectors were pointed that their collections were getting smaller every day.

"The bookies offer a much high, 45 cash per ₱1 than the one being offered by the official STL station. That's why the bettors go to the bookie joints," the collector said.

Puno to run gov't 'jueteng'

From page A1

On designation of Puno as STL implementor, Emanuel said: "STL may be a source of funds that may not be strictly accountable for as we can of the administration people."

Puno said STL operations nationwide would be eschewed until its legality was clarified in its implementation is made clear.

"Now that the PCSO has done an expansion mat, it should review its guidelines to see whether there are any improvements to be made to ensure that STL is not in violation of any existing law," Puno said in a press release.

The postponement began one the weekend and would last until the Department of Interior and local Government (DILG) and the Philippine National Police were given clear guidelines on how the numbers game would be implemented, he said.

Magistrates and the PCSO had planned to start STL operations this week in five areas—Quezon, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Pangasinan.

Charter change

Opposition Sen. Sonfilo "Ping" Lacson, for his part, said that Puno's new role could be interpreted to the government's push to amend the 1987 Constitution through a people's initiative.

"The momentum is too glaring to ignore. Even for illegal numbergame as interior secretary can boast being confirmed by the Commission on Appointments," Lacson said in a statement. Confirmation is not without stories, "he said.

Lacson said Malacañang wanted to amend the Charter to extend Mr Arroyo's term beyond 2010.

"She has no chance but to stay in power, but she will suffer tough fate once she loses presidential immunity," Lacson said, referring to Estrada who was ousted in 2001 and indicted for plunder.

The STL project had been on the drawing boards since the Aquino administration but it had failed to take off despite several attempts due to logistical problems and strong opposition from the Church.

No more pretending

This time, there's no more pretending STL is the government version of jueteng, the small-bettors game underground lottery.

The STL was run involved familiar characters involved in jueteng.

In the document, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer, no STL sales agent was explicitly identified as a "cobrador" while a sales supervisor was by the title of "sabo."

A sales agent stands to get 1.0 percent and a sales supervisor 2 percent of the operating fund that would comprise 35 percent of the net revenues of STL, earmarked by the document.

STL will have three daily draws much like its underground counterparts.

"President Macapagal Arroyo will go down in history as the only President to take jueteng to the mainstream," said jueteng crusader ex-Bishop Oscar Cruz told the Inquirer.

"The government is the opposite to have become a devious expert in sucking in the money of people," Cruz said.

Deed of authority

The PCSO board of directors approved the "Revised Deed of Authority and the Related Rules and Regulations Governing the Conduct of the Actual Net State for the PCSO Small Town Lottery Project" through Resolution No. 464.

It was signed by PCSO chair Sergio Valencia, general manager Rosario Uriarte, vice directors Manuel Morato, Mona Domingo and Teresita Gonzales in a board meeting on Jan. 30, 2006.

Capital stock of P20M

Under the terms, an "Authority to Conduct Net Basis" for STL would be granted only to corporations fully owned by Filipino citizens with a minimum capital stock of P20 million and a minimum paid-up capital of P5 million.

They would also have to deposit a cash bond of not less than P500,000 with the PCSO as security deposit.

The PCSO board said a corporation should either be into "product marketing and allied services" or "duly organized for the purpose of conducting actual net runs" for STL.

"It must possess the necessary organization, experience and reputation to undertake the project as shall be determined by the office [PCSO]," the document said.

Jueteng lord can run STL

Defensor said it was important that the guidelines governing franchise operators would be set up in a transparent manner.

"We don't want to be accused of favoring a group and giving it accommodation. Whether he is a jueteng operator or not, it does not matter. He will only get a franchise if he is qualified under the guidelines," Defensor said.

Cruz, head of the Kilusang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, said STL would practically be run by the "same jueteng lords under former personalities or corporations using the same jueteng administrators and collectors."

Same victims, beneficiaries

"STL and jueteng have exactly the same victims: mini-capitalist, the poor, the same beneficiaries: rotten favored, certain local officials and police authorities, and the same gambling lords' bets cash flow," the archbishop said.

The prelate said the revival of STL might in fact be related to the 2007 elections in which the Arroyo administration would have to "dance with gambling lords as usual."

Like jueteng, which involves number combinations from 1 to 38, the STL can run will have combinations up to 46 numbers. The new game to be called "Pick Two 1-46."

There will only be one STL area run for every province and "chartered city," according to the PCSO document.

Who gets what

Five percent of the gross revenues of STL will go as the "agent corporation" while another 5 percent will go to town.

The remaining 90 percent will be for prizes, administrative and operating funds.

In the so-called charity fund, 30 percent will be given to the city or municipality, 5 percent to the province, 2.5 percent to the district, 5 percent to the local police, and 7.5 percent to the PCSO.

Jueteng operators are widely believed to spread green money among local police and government officials to stay in business. With a report from: D Burgonio

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Nationwide hunt is on for Gringo

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A NATIONWIDE MANHUNT FOR former Senator Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan who is considered "armed and dangerous" is on after Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez issued copies of the arrest warrants to regional officers.

Regional Director Bernardino Ricafort, NBI Special Task Force (STF) chief, said he had also instructed the bureau's regional offices to give his office a periodic update on their operations against Honasan.

"As of now, we will do our best to maintain utmost confidentiality because there are reports about the actual whereabouts of the former senator," Ricafort told reporters yesterday.

"All fugitives, including Honasan, are considered armed and dangerous," Ricafort added.

The NBI STF chief also said that he has requested the Department of Justice to file a motion for the issuance of a hold-departure order against Honasan before the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 142, which issued the warrant against the former senator for the crime of coup d'etat.

PCGG's terms for deal with Marcoses: Full disclosure

By Alcuin Papa

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government said yesterday it would require the Marcoses to disclose the sources of their assets in the Philippines and overseas before it would enter into a compromise with the family.

PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede made the statement following the call by some senators, Agapito Aquino among them, for the Marcoses to disclose all their assets before the government would negotiate with them.

Abcede, however, clarified that PCGG was not about to demand immediate disclosure by the Marcoses, saying doing so would only be unproductive on the negotiations.

"Some have said Mrs. Aquino should reveal her assets. Sure, that should be part of it. There is a procedure," Abcede said.

He said the first stage of any negotiations should be information talks.

"We need to see what the requirements from both sides are. One of the first requirements of the government is full disclosure. We can talk least about the sharing," he said.

Abcede claimed he was "fairly assured" when he suggested a 75-25 sharing scheme in favor of the government for the Marcos wealth in exchange for the dropping of the civil cases against the family. He said the sharing plan would be worked out later.

The Marcoses are facing more than 100 civil cases in different courts.

Pressed last rejected giving the Marcoses 30 percent of the allegedly ill-gotten wealth, negotiating that they're given 10 percent.

The militant Bilaang Mag-babasad ng Pilipinas (BMP) also called on the Marcoses to disclose their assets.

Danilo Ramos, BMP secretary general, however, said the Marcoses should get nothing in exchange for the dropping of the cases against them.

"They (Marcoses) should disclose all their wealth and give it all back to the people. Unlike Mr. Aquino, we vehemently oppose a compromise even if only 10 percent of the wealth will be given to the Marcoses. It is the Filipino people's money and it should be returned to the victims entirely, as well as all the assets acquired with it," Ramos said.

He said any deal with the Marcoses "legitimizes their plunder of the people's coffers and is contrary to the law that prohibits the return of stolen assets to the people."

"This is a wholesale selling of what the martyrs of the struggle against tyranny fought for. A compromise deal with the Marcoses is a betrayal of the public trust," the peasant leader said.

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ISSN 0116-2442 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Est. 23 Nov. 1985

OPINION

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Extermination

DEFENSE SECRETARY AVELINO CRUZ DECORATED Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. with the Distinguished Service Star, and showered him with accolades during the celebration of Army Day last Monday. And there seems to be no other direction Palparan's career is headed but up.

His latest commendation comes in the wake of what he and the Armed Forces insist are achievements in the field in Samar. The targets of his efforts—dissident groups—say he presided over a systematic liquidation campaign of political activists. Palparan counters by suggesting that the only liquidating going on is at the hands of CPP-NPA rackets who are threatened in purging their ranks and passing off the summary executions as the handiwork of the military.

Last week, in Davao City, Raoul Manglapus, chair of Anakbayan in that city, stepped out of his office—only to be accosted, according to Edru, by unidentified men who bundled him into a van without license plates had been covered. The men proceeded to interrogate him about his activities and the people he dealt with. Sir close to an hour, he was questioned and warned to stop his political activities.

Last Sunday in Albay, Cris Hugo, a journalism student, was assassinated as he walked home with his professor. Hugo was a coordinator in the local chapter of the League of Filipino Students. He had been receiving death threats and even visits from armed men who sought to dissuade him from further engaging in political activities.

On the same day Palparan was decorated for his anti-insurgency achievements, the wife and son of a peasant leader were killed in Zambales. The farmer himself was gravely wounded in the attack.

We therefore have, on the one hand, an administration that is eager to promote and honor an officer, Palparan, without as much as seriously and thoroughly investigating allegations of human rights violations on his part. On the other hand, the same administration continues to remain unimpressed—and unconcerned—with what can only be described as a shadowy effort to eliminate dissident leaders in the countryside.

Amnesty International has been expressing alarm over this trend, but naturally this is being ignored by the powers that be. Hard questions need to be asked, however, as the Arroyo administration embarks on an all-out offensive against the CPP-NPA and those it considers to be remnants from organizations or their allies.

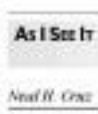
The first question involves the wisdom of practically abandoning the peace process, which has been ongoing, with varying levels of success, for two decades in competition to the nonsensical insurgency's 40 years of armed struggle. We have known since the 1850s that insurgency cannot be defeated without attending to the root causes of revolution, just as the citizenry cannot simply be abandoned to the tender mercies of revolutionaries as a political solution is sought. We also know that the saying "Talk is cheap but lives are not" makes poorer coffin a worthy investment in terms of time and effort.

The second question involves the implications of fiercely defending military officers regardless of whether or not criticisms against them have a basis. This can only demoralize the Armed Forces, which will earn the enmity and hatred of a citizenry who finds it impossible to seek justice or obtain redress for abuses committed in the field.

The third question involves the true implications of an administration policy which might actually inspire more and more people to abandon their quest for change within constitutional limits or by participating in democratic exercises, and instead, head for the hills or go underground. Continued official indifference to what is clearly a systematic policy of extermination can only suggest to dissidents that they are sitting ducks if they persist in staying above-ground and continue to engage in legal political activities. It will drive them to undertake their own, calibrated preemptive response against a society that denies them democratic space. And that can only lead to more confrontation, more beatings of provincial reporters and civil rights, more assassinations, more murder, more fighting, more deaths and destruction.

In the end, we must ask Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo if she agrees with the American soldier in Vietnam who said that in order to save a village, it must be destroyed.

Napocor on another borrowing spree



As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

HERE IS MORE BAD NEWS BUT ONLY FOR electricity consumers but also for all citizens. The Epira (Energy and Power Industry Reform Act), which provides for the privatization of the National Power Corp., with the proceeds supposedly going to pay for the gargantuan debts of the power firm and reduce our foreign and domestic debts and our budget deficit, is not being implemented by Napocor officials. Instead, it is embarking on another borrowing binge for which the Filipino taxpayer will ultimately have to pay. The Napocor borrowed $800 million last year. It has announced that it will borrow another $700 million this year. The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM), an agency tasked by the Epira Law to oversee the privatization of Napocor, has already absorbed P200 billion of Napocor's debts and has declared that it will absorb another $500 million (or P26 billion) more. Who will pay for all these? We the taxpayers, of course, including those who don't use electricity.

Napocor's debts, which contribute enormously to the ballooning budget deficit of the government, are also a result of controversial power projects that to date remain idle due to legal difficulties and lack of clear rules as to who the power sector should be handled. The Epira Law could have prevented our government from further hemorrhaging, but what the Napocor did and continues to do is the opposite.

The foreign debts of the Napocor now add up to P4.1 billion. The debts are included in obligations to local creditors, which also amount to billions of pesos. Napocor's foreign and domestic debts total about one-third of our total debts. The total reached almost P4.6 billion in mid-2005, from only about P4.2 billion in 2004.

President Macapagal-Arroyo contributed immensely to the featherbrain when she ordered the reduction of the purchased power adjustment being collected by Napocor from its bojazz. Including the Manila Electric Co., from P1.25 per kilowatt hour to only 46 centavos per kWh in 2005. The reduction further complicated Napocor's viability.

During the last quarter of 2005, Napocor again went on a borrowing spree, selling about P15 billion worth of zero-coupon bonds to be used to pay for matching obligations and capital expenditures. These bonds are again guaranteed by the national government or the taxpayers, in other words.

Napocor's debts go round and round in zero-coupon circles that sink it deeper into a morass of debts. New loans are made to pay for maturing payables, and so on, as the debts just get bigger and bigger.

More than four years ago, Napocor promised that once the Epira Law was enacted, electricity rates would go down. Four years later, Napocor reneged on its promise by raising the electricity rates in its privatized areas, causing it to incur more debts that are added to our national debt.

Recently, it announced that it had sold at least 13 percent of its assets, already way below the original target of 70 percent by 2004. Congressmen and Napocor officials have been feeling the heat from angry voters. Only September of the "private" (power generation company) bases have been sold, said Sen. Joker Arroyo.

The net trend of the latest moves Napocor officials gave for the delays in the sale of these assets. Four years after the passage of the Epira Law, they have done very little to remedy the ills, get the approval of the creditors for the sale or liven up lucrative supply contracts. These are the reasons potential investors back away from the bidding for some plants.

There is only one reason Napocor officials are delaying privatization: they want to keep their lucrative jobs. And who wouldn't, when its officials enjoyed 19.2 billion in bidbidats and commissions from coal and oil importation alone, billions more in commissions from bond flotations and shady deals, and a P11.66-billion retirement package?

After collecting the P12-billion retirement package, for example, Napocor officials were rehired as consultants and it can be surmised that they are again back in business. At least 25 executives and senior officials availed themselves of this retirement package, each pocketing about P500 million. The same officials created companies that rammed contracts with Napocor. Some of them were found to be still collecting huge sums of money from Napocor power plants and electric cooperatives in cahoots with them. At least one former official's company was found to be still collecting P400,000 a month from Casecnan (Electric). If so just ask the management contract is signed with the firm.

Remember also that Napocor is the only buyer of bad fossil, bunker oil, dirtied by independent Power Producers (IPPs). Why? Because Napocor is under "take or pay" terms while IPPs pay 5 percent tariff. Napocor gets kickbacks from the IPPs.

Napocor oil and coal imports amount to almost $300 million a year. Ten percent of that is $30 million or P1.5 billion. The government is losing P1.5 billion worth of kickbacks to Napocor officials.

It is obvious that its own officials have made Napocor their own private treasure chest. Arroyo said he would bring the retirement packages back to the bones like ribbon commercials. After all, it is their money that they lent, not scam which cost the taxpayers only P726 million.

It appears that Napocor is being sabotaged from within—by the very same people who took its money. What is the President doing about it?

Poetic justice

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE REACTIONS OF PEOPLE TO THE SOUNDS of one concert last week have set me wondering about it myself. What made it so easy? What caused the dissonant flow of rappers, hiphoppers and other neo-Zionist sensations of society? Why did the musicians volunteer so readily? (Does anyone the hunch that dortlend, the musicians wanted to own it their managers, fearing all sorts of repercussions on their careers, did not.) And most importantly, why did the public take to it like hedonistic sundowners to the desert to an oasis?

Well, part of it, as many people have said by, is the Lupus. I like to give credit where credit is due, even if it is this me. Before most song is always false because it is produced on dots, if corruptions, invitations to prayer. Yes. I do think the classroom, the conditions, and the public responded the way they did because they figured these talents, their mastery and progress, and their selections would not go to waste. It helps to have an active motive or personal agenda. It helps to have credibility.

But there is a far deeper reason for it. I've been reflecting on what a musician said that night, which was that we need to have touched a chord somewhere, a truly apt comment in a night of music. Or music for the most part to the youth's ears: Some members of my generation, or indeed the previous one, appeared as I have wondered if a good deal of what they heard might be stalled that. But that's another story). I've formed a theory about that "chord." I pass this way.

In his book, "The Rebel," Albert Camus proposed that the true rebel doesn't just say no to something, he says yes to something else. He doesn't just negate, he affirms. This doesn't mean that when he says no to what is wrong on one hand, he has to respond for what is right on the other. That means that his "yes" is primary. Just to his "no." The affirmation is embedded in his negation. The connection is natural, intuitive, instantaneous.

That is not as convoluted as it seems and is readily seen in the two Edsas. The "no" to Edsa-uno naturally presupposed a "yes" to Cory. That was what made Cory's rule to be "the opposite of Marcos" a most powerful thing. The saying no to an evil presupposed a saying yes to a good. Just as well, the saying no to Erap presupposed a saying yes to the good represented by the combined forces of civil society, the Church, business, media and the military (ex-cons, Gringo's in haste). But society does not need a clear foe as "alternative." Steeped as we are in impersonal relations, we needed only to think goal, or hope of a better life to remove Erap. It was not a love that launched a thousand ships, or 10,000 people, or Edsa II. Ditto a no to Estrada or Erap as bad is to heaven, positively, as much as revulsion. If we had only Gibb to inspire us during Edsa II, all the more would have risen, if indeed they could have been roused to aid in the first place.

The link between saying yes to a good while saying no to an evil is broken today. The "no" is not presupposed in the "yes." Saying no to Gibb does not name silly contents in its power to command opposites. The good remains an unknown quantity, whether in thought or in feeling, whether starkly or vaguely. That's what's causing the apathy and cynicism nowadays, even as the moneys here rule, the more widespread deterioration of the regime. Indeed, that's what's causing a good deal of the public to say "Sawa na nito at pulitika! I'm tired of politics!" That is little helped by the fact that the latest big political issue in the country after the three Erap families, the people who helped Gibb oust the vote, and accused rapist who just happen to belong to the other side. The confrontation of evil cannot start to move heights with that burden "political" baggage.

That's what made the concert last Thursday the magical thing it was. It was not that the listeners saying no to an evil and yes to good, it reexamined the bond between negation and affirmation, it re-forged the connection between protest and hope. For the first time in quite a long time, there was a point where natural and moral law, the political and the ethical, the dreams once again. There, you found the invincible link, bond, connection between saying "Never again!" to martial law and saying "Ever again!" to all those in decent and honest and life-affirming. The one presupposed the other, fused in the fires of time.

People would tell me later we might have stumbled on an alternative form of protest. I doubt them for saying that. Just. Once to say as well that we did not discover anything new, we merely rediscovered something old, but that has nearly been forgotten. We need a point source for the transformation of evil to take on moral urgency. We need a pure voice for the voice of God, or the people—which, as the phrase "vox populi, vox Dei" tells us, is not one and the same thing—to be heard. That was what made people power happen in the past, and that is what will make people power happen in the future.

I personally think that it is the voice of musicians, and of artists and intellectuals generally—poets, writers (including journalists), painters, theater people, movie-makers, philosophers, etc.—and not those of the usual suspects that will sing, or sing, loudest in the coming months. There's to an honor since, there is a third-house voice, there will be a thunderous voice. It is their powers against evil that will give us to see what is good. It is a natural cause to channel our evil energies to break them.

Some will call it practical magic. I like to think of it as poetic justice.

Why aren't people marching to oust GMA?

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY DREAMGIVERS have made a dizzy magnificent obsession to reach the fad of the popularity ratings of President Macapagal-Arroyo since the May 2004 elections.

The latest surveys, by Pulse Asia taken from Feb. 18 to March 4, 2006, and by the Social Weather Stations from Dec. 17 to 20, 2005, show a significant rise in the ratings of the administration since the impeachment complaint against her and the demonstrations which its vestiges had made, making her believe the more unpopular and reviled President she Philippines has ever had, having seen.

The media on the surveys' reverse show a resurgence of most of the same results. From which the president is now showing much enthusiasm that the mood of public opinion is the case of life, history's ratings, the optimum chat in a democracy public opinion, quite eminently has been raised on the head. The ratings have for unassailable incidents of the Philippines, and the legal is a long book. Question is: to have hope for her to hold on? Is there an exit route?

The Pulse Asia survey shows that 52 percent of respondents believed her resignation would not to do her interest of the country, indicating the rejection of the opposition of her performance. The survey found that the percentage of those interviewed after the declaration of a national emergency on Feb. 24 who resisted her to resign, rose to 68 , compared to 53 persons among those interviewed before the declaration. The Pulse Asia interpreted these findings as suggesting that the declaration of a national emergency may have made more Filipinos more receptive to her departure.

The Feb. 18 to March 4 survey confirmed the results of Pulse Asia's survey of October 2005, which found that the majority of Filipinos would reject the resignation or removal of the Arroyo as the best way to solve the current political impasse. From another perspective, the 2005 survey of Nov. 27 to Dec. 8, 2005, found that 54 percent of respondents were dissatisfied with the President's performance, leading the polling firm to conclude that the results contained Mr Arroyo's status as the most falsified President since 1986.

The picture drawn by the surveys materially boils down to widespread revulsion against the regime, manifesting public opinion, as it was defined by the several crises that the regime has undergone, including the impeachment complaints against the President and the aborted coup of Feb. 24.

The findings of the surveys all indicate that the majority of the people went not to go and are dissatisfied with or disapproved of her performance. This leads me to wonder why despite these findings, she has hung on to power. I would like to think it is out of recognition of the dire straits she is in and the seriousness of the political crisis that she has precipitated. I would like to believe that this is apparently much consistency of dissatisfaction was translated into mass political action that would force the President out of office?

It is no longer helpful to explain this apathy to the people's passive fatigue. An explanation offered by civil and law minds. Rather, I am stating questions that ought to be answered by the survey organizations and their researchers. This is one is understood by the fact that since July last year, the President has the control of challenges to her rule, including several calls for people power. Cabinet defections, an impeachment complaint and the coup attempt of Feb. 24, 2006.

The surveys are supposed to reflect the sentiment of the mainstream, the masses. Where does all this revolutionary go when the calls for mobilization were made? Why has it not responded and instead remained exasperatingly indifferent to the alleged wrongdoings of the dictator regime? The survey results do not even mention public disaffection, but only it is that this undercurrent of disgruntlement has not been tapped to drive the movements for political change?

On the other hand, it may be argued that the President has not lost the "moral authority" to govern or to hold on to power; it is also clear that she has been receiving support from the presidential palaces and majors who form the political governance machinery of the regime. The big question is: Where does the allegiance of the majority of the military lie? Is the military's loyalty questionable to be this a phantom majority that does not show up in the elections when it is needed most?

The surveys have been followed closely by the political players who seem to boost whether the public mood would support a military-backed civilian action to topple the regime and provide mass muscle to or lumbersome military intervention or attitudinal support from the regime. But the surveys have as the period to be unproductive to those who have based their calculations on mounting mass opposition to people power directly on their results, are they misreading the signs? Are they magnifying the nuisance of the public opinion? How about the other side of public opinion, that is the silent one held by those who have been politically inactive or who have been apathetic?

Maybe some questions should be directed to the public opinion survey takers. The surveys have limited on the domain of the dispensers. Why have they not asked why people are not rushing to the streets to join the campaign to oust the Arroyo regime? Actually, the survey results derived mostly from opinions of the disgruntled and the contented have resulted in a distorted picture of political reality and disastrous political miscalculations demonstrated by misfired coups and failed attempts at people power, I say, just asking questions.

Joseph the father

I BOUGHT IT IS DEC. 16, 2005, ISSUE OF TIME MAGAZINE, attracted by the cover's blurb: "The Best Photos of 2005." The photographs were a powerful essay to storybooks: a coffin boat, yes, in the mid-, the camel's bone pincers and an early 19th-century painting from Peru, entitled "St. Joseph and the Child Jesus."

The painting, by an unknown artist, is very masculine with its solid dark colors, but it touches the viewer in the way Joseph carries the Child Jesus, and in the way the child clings to his father with his arms and legs.

The painting was there in accompany an article, "Father and Child," by David Van Biema, focusing on a revival of interest in the "hidden virtues" of St. Joseph. I finished up that Time article again last Sunday, March 19, St. Joseph's feast day.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Stand-in

Joseph is certainly almost invisible in the New Testament, almost like a substitute or stand-in actor, waiting to play a bit role. He is silent, without a single quote attributed to him. He appears in only a few scenes in the Gospels where Jesus turns 12 and acknowledges his heavenly father.

Now there's renewed interest in Joseph and, surprisingly, this comes from the Protestants, who don't actually give that much attention to saints. Jim Sferra explains how Presbyterians have rediscovered Joseph as a model for fathers and for adoptive sons, were teaching two writing a book about it, and adoptive father. The product, "The Forgotten Man of Christmas: Joseph's Story," was published in 2000, based on extensive research into the Bible as well as non-biblical sources.

Joseph also plays a lead role in a religious novel, "Resting Heaven," by Jerry Jenkins, author of the apocalyptic "Left Behind" series. In a near-science fiction, Anne Shirl's latest best-seller, "Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt," gives Joseph a centralized role, guiding the pregnant Mary to Egypt to escape Herod.

Courage

Ironically, it is the lack of biblical information about Joseph that allows writers, religious or secular, to create and reinvent him in different forms, according to the needs of the times.

A 2nd-century text, called "The Protevangelium of James," glorifies Joseph's role as a "chaste caretaker." When you think of the circumstances here, we should probably add "courageous" to the description of Joseph, for how is to mention Mary was probably to start revolted figure, pregnant, very young (perhaps 14 to 15) and unwed. The "Protevangelium" describes Joseph's cares when water when asked, in fifteen versions of an annunciation, to care for Mary.

The "Protevangelium" depicts Joseph as a very old man, with children from a previous marriage. On one hand, that depiction may be a way to explain away the reference to Jesus' brothers (no one who got Mary pregnant). On the other hand, the "Protevangelium" describes doubts, maybe suspicions of Joseph as a dirty old man. When this May December couple show up at the temple for their betrothal, the high priest supposedly subjects them to a trial by ordeal. Drinking a potion of bitter water, they walk seven times around the altar, pregnant Mary's virginity may would have died from the ordeal. The "Protevangelium" has Mary and Joseph surviving, of course, since the only Church needed to emphasize female morality.

Joseph is to remain invisible for the next few centuries, until the 14th century, when he was rehabilitated, as a younger man, into a more favorable light. This was at a time when Europe was going through famine, war and an epidemic. Social instabilities, especially the family, were threatened, so the promotion of Joseph, this time to head a Holy Family, was timely.

Van Biema analyzes the current revival of interest in Joseph against a backdrop of religion in America. Joseph's importance again reconciled Christians, as they seek ways to "masculinize" religion convincing most males to attend church. Joseph, the silent, strong man, is a male bonding, similar to that of Joseph and Jesus, in devotion.

Catholic or Protestant, our religious leaders might want to look at how they might recruit St. Joseph to handle some problems in 21st-century Filipino society.

Counselors nowadays like one-on-one, father-based is seen mainly as a female concern. But if we are to help today's non-existent or masculinity in the Philippines, men don't think twice about learning that they have five children, "father presence" (all either), meaning the children were involved with different women.

The learning will often include claims that they're not supporting the children, that they were older or can't live with sons and get away with it, free of any responsibility as the woman be unemployed, and to the protection of their honor.

It'll another pervasive exclusion or three-thinking situation seems a how they were able to improvise a trusted woman, to that it's another male, the excluded one, who has to take the responsibility for raising the child.

Act of faith

We when you look hard at Filipino machismo, you'll find there's a tendency to be insecure of having responsible and nurturehood. Motherhood, after all, is said to be an act of knowledge, while fatherhood is an act of faith. Put another way women know who their children are, men can only believe the children are his. Traditionally a male resembling the neighbor could be registered away to part of paternity, meaning the husband's honor was saved. The unfaithful while that was pregnant. Paternal anger has given rise to age of nervous workers, as men leave their wives behind for a year or two.

Because of the traditional values that encourage men to abandon their children a woman pregnant, other men will come into the picture, challenged to accept a woman and offspring from other relationships. There are good men like St. Joseph all around us, who won't ask for a DNA test to validate paternity. I know one man, who works as a government clerk, raising four children, only one of whom is his own biological child. He's been with the three and has come into their lives, previous relationships. I have never seen him berating his own biological child over the others.

I would like to think there are many more like him, but I know you of stories where a cuckolded husband takes out his anger on the child who is not his own, especially in the adolescence affair. And we know, too, of the statistics around child sexual abuse, where many cases involve a couple her as an offender, outnumbering that for true sexual rights over his stepchildren because he has to support them.

Religious leaders will need to find ways to get St. Joseph to help deal with these problems. The messages can revolve around the theme of a couple as father or "true dads." It is to make excuses to be a father. A case made, like St. Joseph, because more male when he starts to go beyond biology to care for children, not his, and not, eventually, his.

Nostalgia and menopause

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN, AT LEAST AS far as pop songs go. All faded musical stars must be, sooner or later, be born again, and the only thing that are old enough or even earning impossible income but still young enough to remember their youth and want to relive it. Then the stars will get a second wind, so to speak, or rock-start a reboot. Every event after the first block of success has given ways to obsolescence.

In the past few months alone, we have played host—and enthusiastic audiences—to such reincarnations as Air Supply, Rick Springfield, Smokey Robinson and Gordon, Chad and Jeremy, Spiral Staircase, Herman's Hermits, even Andy Williams and Sergio Mendes.

There is confusion to make. I've never been tempted to watch any of those shows, ever. If I could, it's material, judge a few tickets or was from the promoters, and even if the tickets and I are given free of charge, I'd still be hard-put to "groove" pop hits are aimed, to the delight of our generation of boomers. The shows I get to buy tag-a-rides about the nostalgia train was for the rest of the country, but not for me. I'm not old enough to listen to a geriatric pair! A pair, moreover, who would only remind me of how many years and decades have passed since I was a teenager moaning over mellow tunes and sappy lyrics.

Still, I can appreciate why people of my age group would be desirous these kinds-and perhaps even more than desirous—of nostalgia. After all, are often the best times of our lives, when we were carefree and had no more serious concerns than getting our grade to ask no one in the school year's end.

It is a time worth looking back on, and the songs of pop idols provided the soundtrack to those days, the memories easily summoned by a few memorable bars. Sunday church and lyrics that rise unbidden in our fading memories.

Besides, it's our last hurrah. I suspect that we are less than a decade away before the songs of our generation join the ranks of the Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, even early Beatles hits we now considered fodder for oldies!

So before our own inevitable obsolescence holds us in its cold jaws, we might as well join the nostalgia in good spirits by taking a nostalgic musical trip, back to the days when songs had distinct melodies and danceable tunes, and the words, though sappy, were not so full of profanity and crude sexual innuendo. Now, if only they could get the original Monkees, especially Davy Jones, to get together and perform the many musical hits they produced! With Google, they should find a few more of them, I might yet be convinced to get on that bandwagon to see pop music past.

• • •

NOT exactly a nostalgia trip, but indeed a homage to the life (despite the wonders of a certain spa-are going through), is the musical "ways that life," through every weekend until April at the new theatre in Greenhills.

"Life" is a musical that is based solely to the hit Italian that women's egotism as they go through menopause, but it could also refer to the low wattage in the men whose stories and songs provide the counterpoint to the women's woes.

Originally staged in Canada before making a successful off-Broadway run, "We're Still Here" tells the story of three high school classmates who are particularly up to hitting forty on the nose and are still here. Still here, that is, despite the pressing issues that threaten of impending Broadway because early menopause and a failed marriage doomed her to a series of dead-end jobs and even worthless. Maxine is a high-powered CEO who has never really found personal happiness, moving through a string of husbands and boyfriends, learning how to "work it" in the boardroom. Then there's Joanne, who has never worked outside the home, Jan Tan, a boasting lady who is never out was a financial star in her business bungles, extensions and pain-some workout discipline into their original innocent youthful love.

• • •

MANAGE Marian Rivera-de, one of the women behind Sabaglasi, the provocative outfit behind "Wag na Kang Umiyak" and "Ang Pag-ibig" was involved in how this and was fired with the idea of bringing it to stardom. "It was only talks about menopause and aging, but also about love and romance, change and new but felt around," says Sabaglasi.

Indeed, on the second night of the Manila premiere, "We're Still Here" seems as more serious-than-light drama, with the women's every appearance or long pure middle-age who "get" the jokes about menopause and even more so the scenarios charged jokes. The hands-down member that belongs to the audience is the middle-aged appliance, though, a token Cynthia, portrayed by a spirited Pinky Marquez, finally breaks out of her shell and not only tells off her philandering husband Chuck but also discovers her inner talent.

The cast of "We're Still Here" is also charming and affecting. Lynn Sherman sure he a hit too young for a musical on menopause, but when, as Sara, the singer of coming to terms with her own anxiety, she's quite moving. Ditto Cynthia Gonzalez as the spark plug Marnie is energetic and compelling. A surprise to Nina Bautzsalen as Jan (in other five stage outing. Though tentative at times, she brings a measure of confidence and even comedy to her role.

"It's like a giant reunion concert—taking out—," I told Bingo at the musical's end. There's certainly a lot of passion and empowerment—and here—in this musical.

Japanese history on the Internet

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

LAST WEEK, A SMALL GATHERING OF LIBRARians, archivists and cultural workers was convened by Salvador Araneta, librarian of the University of the Philippines, to meet Mitsi Ikawa, director general of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR). When I presumed to be a socialist all area actually an introduction to the world that we doing in Japan with regard to historical records and, more precisely, how they are digitizing these records and making them available on the Internet.

What I found astounding is the fact that the Japanese National Archives houses a collection of over 1.3 million books and approximately 350,000 Japanese government documents and records from the Meiji era (1868-1912) to the present. Our members have our own National Library and Records Management and Archives Office (NARA), which passes itself off as the "National Archives," with manpower in terms of size. If you count a graphic depiction of the Japanese collection, it would end to only the bookshelves would run to about 30 kilometers. That's almost the entire distance from Manila to Bataan.

With all the controversy that surrounds Japan's way of remembering its own history, especially as it relates to Asia during World War II, one would think it would be difficult to access its historical records. Fortunately, the American occupation of all the records they could find from Japan to Washington where everything was opened, processed and microfilmed. Besides here, the original documents are also available on hand, but materials now from an impressive section of the Japan Center for Historical Records that was established under the Japan National Archives.

The same thing was done with the records of martial law dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Imelda Aguinaldo's seat of government in Malacañan is to American hands in 1999 and he fled to Hawaii, Inferia, all the government records were sent away to Washington, where they were carted, microfilmed, and eventually returned to Manila in the late 1990s when the US Library of Congress and National Archives used their staff space for other materials. They kept the microfilms and sent out the originals.

Today all this documentary evidence is preserved in our National Library by Director Ma. Gerunina Cruz. It is effective of our extensive personnel of history that this collection, formerly called the "Philippine Insurgent Records," has been renamed the "Philippine Revolutionary Papers."

While we are glad on hand the original manuscripts of our heroes in the Philippines, to scan have sometimes been difficulty locating items that have been lost, stolen or misfiled were some spaces are always present in the US-made microfilm that comes with a useful index. Maybe when the Philippine archives have more resources, we have a similar center that will make important Philippine documents accessible to the people, both Filipinos and foreigners, on the Internet.

During the meeting, administrator of JACAR online was presented, and it made my heart skip a beat when I was able to search online that could find materials under certain key words. Often an image of the original document came out and could be read, downloaded or printed out free of charge. Ironically, we asked to search under "Laurel" and I was surprised to find something on him and a "puppet government" in the Philippines. I asked if this heading or key word was found in the original. I was told that some of the terms were supplied by the Americans describing their view or their interpretation of Philippine history.

I have always been wary of the terms "puppet government" and "collaborator" which are used mindlessly in our school textbooks, despite the unsettled debate on the issue. Many Filipinos who went to Japan in those dark days was done out of enthusiasm or normalcy. As you can see, documents by themselves say something, but the accompanying interpretations come from the historians.

When we asked to see the resolution the "Laurel" was based on, "our own archivists were not allowed to be inserted. Dr. Ricio Jose, the authority on the Japanese period in our history, said that there was a lot of material available in the archives, but this was not reflected in the JACAR's website. We hope we can see more of our own history on the world! For example, the records important to Philippine historians are listed under the heading "philippine" which is a transliteration of the Japanese word for our country. If you make the "mistake" of searching a search under "Philippines" with an "s", you will probably be told no records exist on this topic.

When I remarked on this, I was told that the search words were determined by archivists, not by historians, and that JACAR would welcome any suggestions.

I guess an archivist's point, no matter how well-funded and sophisticated, can be perfect but then this is much better than anything we have at the moment. It makes Filipino historians dream of a time when we can access Philippine records on the Net without having to be held in Manila, Washington, Madrid or Tokyo.

The world is indeed becoming a smaller place because of the Internet. But can only hope that more people will see what is available to study the past and gain perspective for the present and the future.

• • •

Comments are welcome at ocampo@phcaro.edu.

Hunt for Red partisans and Chinese investors

LIKE A NATIONALIST, NOT A COMMUNIST. This I am amazed by the ongoing anti-communist witch-hunt being orchestrated by the Arroyo administration. It is reminiscent of a dreaded era of the late 50's Sen. Joseph McCarthy—especially in the zealous of an all-out effort to deflect public attention from the perceived illegitimacy of the Arroyo administration.

Under globalization, of which Prime Minister Abejo-Arroyo is the head on basis of World Bank-International Monetary Fund dictates/conditions, the nation's set up is a communist government and a socialistic economy. True China, which exemplifies the intended combination, is the unverified declaration of unprecedented investments today making that country the fastest-growing economy in the world. China is now listed as the world's third largest economy, succeeding Germany. Former Germany's largest. In fact, the United States, which is moving into a post-industrial society, has practically moved over to manufacturing base in China.

As the architect of globalization in our country, Mr. Romulo, together with his family (including a grandchild and her nurse), went on a pilgrimage to Beijing not just to invite China to invest in the Philippines. As a result, China is now building the controversial Humbilad project. Chinese mining concerns are now busy prospecting for mineral ore here, especially gold.

In other words, while the Arroyo administration is not a totalitarian communist state, it is at the same time currently hugging Beijing, the capital of the world's largest communist country, to help bolster the then not economy. How can Mr. Romulo go on a private hunt for local communists while increasingly depending on the communist regime in China for investments?

—ARNADO GO DOJENO,
Unit 321 Uccion Square Condominium,
141 39th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

LETTERS

Graveyard of dictators

GELLMOT BELACHE AQUINO'S "BC (before/after aquino)" (PDI, 3/5/06) is loud for thought.

History has been a graveyard of dictators who rose to power and died in exile (e.g., the likes of Idi Amin, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, Haile Selassie, Mobutu Sese Seko, Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines).

The United States has a track record of supporting Latin dictators, Africans and Asian dictators who were pawns during the Cold War.

The after-effects are still there. If we look around, International relations, fluid and changing constantly, also old and often strewn. Hence, "dictators never die" as said so truly by the columnist.

—JOSEFINO ANTHONY,
Hospital ROBO International Inc.,
Sawmill Road, Laguna City

A soldier's right to free speech

I MAY TAKEN ABACK WHEN I HEARD the defense secretary say something like this: "Someone who is given the right not to lose arms has the corresponding duty to use it responsibly (i.e., defend his country from aggressors, go after lawless elements, protect the lives and property of civilians, etc.) as opposed to the idea of using it for coercion, harassment or intimidation."

Never have I heard that the granting of a right entails the loss of other rights. Why should a soldier lose his rights to free speech just because he is a member? He still remains a citizen, equal to the others, and may enjoy his legitimate grievances. Of course, he will have to be careful in airing complaints against his superiors. He serious injustices he should be able to file a case just like Jose de La Cruz.

And his complaints do not even have to be always political. He example, can be see rightfully complain of lack of logistical support, or of insufficient monies to support a family, or of inhumane working conditions in the barracks, or of scanty pensions? Does he have to keep quiet about his concerns just because he has a uniform?

If we accept such logic, then the soldiers would be no different from thousands of fighters who blindly follow orders.

Sun Lt. Gil. Lumbo Hernandez, who replaced Col. Ariel Querubin, himself said in effect (to Manny Mogato): "Di ko alam (as a match to Kiko, do not follow me!" (PDI, 3/5/06). This means that soldiers should keep their constitutional sense and always just the legitimate orders.

Aside from breaching a duty of passivism in the Cabinet, which demands a high degree of compassion, the defense secretary is also a lawyer. I therefore expect his arguments to be more logical and rational.

—EDU S. SAVOY,
L-118 Sampaguita Subdivision,
Pandacan City

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Cory's secure legacy

DURING THE WIDELY LOVED CEREMONY in Malacañan last Feb. 24, Ms Corazon Aquino could the saviour enjoins us to be as true of People Power as our choice of herself as one, himself, she said, all of us, Filipinos, are more of People Power. I beg to disagree with her.

If there is one enduring symbol of People Power, it is Cory.

People Power was a glorious moment for Filipinos. From there, Ms Aquino emerged as the darling of the international community and the world press and, most of all, our President and universal people.

But shortly thereafter, people sought to unseat her. She refused to be cowed into submission and valiantly defied the threats. In the end, she kept her seat and finished her term, but at great cost to our country. Soldiers died and, perhaps, thousands of ordinary citizens also died of pursuing the bullets inside of the economic crisis made worse by the continuous of bloody coup attempts, a power crisis and a failed agrarian reform program.

The Aquino presidency may not have been a great one. The change that everybody was expecting did not come. In short, we were disillusioned. It was to take awakening for most of us, but we awoke by one President. She may not feel her into making the extreme sacrifice of resigning her to appease those who opposed her. She served a redeemer's purpose and we know how important it was—but she should have seen, it wouldn't have been necessary for many if she did not think it. We could have fallen into anarchy.

What I do not understand is why Ms Aquino can't give Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo the same support; why she is allowing herself to be used by the same people who tried to unseat her; and why she is now associating herself with a former president who, five years ago, she thought was not fit to be president. And I wonder: after President Arroyo is gone, would Ms Aquino also regret having demanded the former's resignation and then join hands with her recent successor of the succeeding presidents? So, what will this madness end? And when can we finally move forward?

Ms Aquino should reassess her ways. There may have worked wonders in 1986, but are they the right things to do now?

Must we never get new ideas, new ways to effect change. People Power worked great 20 years ago. But as we have seen in 2001, a second People Power weakened our democratic institutions. Doing it a third (or some may argue, a fourth) time might just throw our country into chaos.

People saw the irony on the 20th anniversary of Edsa I when millions could not identify Ferdy and a state of emergency was declared. It made the process more than the day was this degree, she seized People Power willing to gamble the gains of People Power by aligning herself with power-hungry people.

Ms Aquino should forget "it is" People Power. Freedom, our legacy is eternal. She shouldn't own with it.

—JESSE ISABELA RAUTERS,
46 K. Bonifacio St., Quezon City

No interest in rising prices

MANUEL ALARCIO IS WRONG IN SAYING that because of the value added tax, the government has a vested interest in rising prices. (PDI, 3/28/06) He explains, "The higher the prices are of gasoline, cooking gas, electricity, water, food and services, the more taxes it collects. And the VAT is paid by the ultimate consumer."

It is true that when the price of a product increases, the government gets to collect more taxes on that product. However, higher prices can also lead to consumers buying less (assuming that the consumers are price sensitive). Therefore, the tax gains expected from higher prices may be offset by less sales. In short, rising prices will not increase BIR collection and may even reduce it.

Consider also that the poor typically do not engage in "conspicuous spending." The poor will always spend the same amount regardless of the price of goods. Therefore, VAT collection from the poor will not be affected by the price of goods. On the other hand, the rich tend to engage in conspicuous spending. The rich's spending depends on the price of goods. The lower the price, the more they buy; and the higher the price, the less they buy.

Therefore, there is no benefit when prices rise, while there is a corresponding gain when they fall.

One last note, rising prices result in inflation. High inflation is not good for the economy and is felt mainly by the poor. As such, there is no reason for the government to want rising prices.

—OLIVER PACHECO,
oliver.pacheco@verizon.com

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

'Guling-Guling' teaches youth traditions, values

By Cristina Arnaldo
Pasuy, Ilocos Norte

ABOVE from its ancient church (photo above), Pasuy town in Ilocos Norte offers the "Guling-Guling" Festival as a tourist attraction.

IT WAS NO ORDINARY DAY FOR RESIDENTS OF PASUY, ILOCOS Norte, on Feb. 26. After all, it was the last day of entertaining before the Catholic faithful entered the Lenten season of sacrifice.

The people usually run to the streets, enjoying the last day of worldly pleasures, before the 40-day observance of Jesus Christ's sacrifice starts.

The Guling-Guling Festival, traditionally held the day before Ash Wednesday when Catholics officially mark Lenten penitence, is a mix of merrymaking and street dancing for Pasuy folk.

For Florida Concepcion, 88, the festival is also a time when the elderly can relive the values of tradition with the young.

"We take pride in our culture and we want the young to continue the tradition while we watch the sunset of our lives," Concepcion said.

"Guling-guling" means to move one's forehead the Ilgas of the Cross, using ashes from burnt leaves, instead of being bathed in water, however, many villagers receive the imprint made from a wet, white rice flour called the "bahaw" from the town mayor.

DAYTOY TI AMIANAN

Former Councilor Eisenhower Adiao put up another three-tiered and supervised the digging of three holes, locally known as the "tinnawong," on the front yard of his house. Measuring as the "tinnawong," on the front yard of his house. Measuring as an important town tradition, ally used to heat up a large pot of the "bassat" (sugarcane molasses), which would turn to molasses when cooked.

3-chamber oven

The oven has three chambers—the wood is fed in one, a large cooking pan literally known as the "sillan" is heated in the middle, and the rice is in the last.

"This was how our forebears cooked in the olden days. This is also an opportunity to show our children how it was in the beginning," Adiao said.

Pasuy remains an agricultural town. Sugarcane farming continues to create livelihood among residents. Sugarcane cultivation is the basic component of the popular Ilocano food sard vinegar and the native cake "dudol."

Adiao's former town mining owner designated areas where the "dudol" (food version of the sugar mixture) was prepared. The dudol, made of sugarcane extract, coconut milk and rice, is normally given to the festival crowd.

It took four hours for Adiao and three others to cook a large pan of the dudol. Cooking the native cake demands constant stirring once the rice starts to boil, to prevent it from being overcooked or burned.

Cultural preservation

Seven large dudol pots were prepared at various points around town and offered to visitors making part in the street dancing during the parade. The town began as a remote village in the western section and ended at the plaza.

Mayor Rodilario Clemente said the festival was also the community's contribution to cultural preservation. "This is our modest way of showing how the community can make use of its heritage to propel development," he said.

Before the street dancing, more than a dozen "ativao" or dressed-up carabao (water buffalo) paraded on the streets.

Clemente said the activity was the town's symbol of paying homage to farmers and for the need of families for their sustenance in food production and rural development. "Many of our farmers have abandoned the fields because of the rising costs of farm inputs. This is our tribute to those who continue to till the earth," he said.

Festival organizers also saw an opportunity to introduce to communities both facilities around town, installed at the shores of local and international travel, on heading toward the North during the summer season.

Pasuy Church

Pasuy is the home of the world-renowned Pasuy Church. It took the town several years, however, to capitalize on the religious icon and attract investors to put up resources to accommodate with the demands of tourists.

Right across the church is the Ilocano de Roca, a restaurant sitting on a spacious ground complete with a fountain and mini-park, where tourists can view the church.

The structure also houses souvenir shops where the town's famous bidet/basement Suaoc dudol and other products are sold.

A bed-and-breakfast hotel, right across the town hall, is set to open for business in May in time for the fiesta to catch the spillover of excursionists.

Cycling champ pedals to fish farming

By Ben Rhuzz Ebreo
Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya

HIS FIRST LOVE came during his struggling days of cycling, but he lavished on his second love—fish farming.

At the peak of his cycling career, Lapiz Alava, 47, never thought of being in the fishpond business although he was a graduate of agriculture at a state college and supplying people in Nueva Vizcaya with nutritious products.

Alava, the finisher of the four in the 1986 Marlboro four leg 360-km, participated in the annual cycling marathon from 1984 to 1988, and gained popularity nationwide.

He left the vigorous cycling scene in 1989, governor Lucilo decided to develop 1,000-sqm lot at Sitio Sailer in Barangay Nunungawan, Solano, upon his wife's advice. The couple has three children.

"It is where I got an interest and encouragement in fish farming because I have been observing that in my ... more profitable than other kinds of farming," he said.

Alava, however, has kept a sentimental his career in putting up a bike shop named after him in Dadi.

Fish kill

Starting a fishpond venture was not easy for experienced a fish kill due to overstocking, having heavy mixed ammonia and fertilizer contaminated by local fishery experts.

His first harvest contributed little to economic on the business. Slowly he developed his main farm from another lot he inherited from his grandparents in 2003 in Barangay Villa Colmenares Dadi.

The five hectares, tributaries-fed fish farm also has a small impounding area that serves nearby rice fields owned by other villagers. It has eight ponds with a size of 20,000-sqm each.

Alava harvests fish in four to five months. At most, the yield is eight tons per pond which he sells at a bottom price of P50 a kilo.

"Fish farming is good. I even spend more hours here than in my bicycle center business. My full conversion is here," he said.

Being the largest producer of tilapia in the province, Alava is now developing a fish hatchery (their fish hatchery) to meet full supply from the Solano City of Malico in Nueva Ecija and Ilocos.

Love for cycling

Alava said his love for cycling remained. Every weekend, he spends time on the road from Bagabag town to Nueva Vizcaya to Lagawe town in Ifugao or to Santiago City in Isabela.

He founded cycling and mountain biking clubs in Dadi to help and support local enthusiasts, along with other cycling associations (barangay officials, even a retired police officer). Abel Macalia, Cabo is based in the United States and Carlo Gaich (manager of a property business).

Alava has spoken for his fish products in Villaverde, Ifugao, Bayombong, Bambang and his hometown, Bagabag in Nueva Vizcaya, Lamut town in Ifugao, and Bambang.

Many people want to go into fish farming but big capital is needed since it entails expenditures from pond preparation and management, he said.

Depending on the size of the ponds, a farmer sets up at least eight bags of feeds per 1,000 fingerlings for the whole season. Alava said he was spending P9,000 daily for feeds. He employs six workers and hires seven others for distribution.

Officials of the provincial agriculture office said Alava's fish products have improved the local fish sufficiency level by 1 percent.

Last year, Alava was named outstanding fisherman (fish category) by the Council Sales Awards search for outstanding agriculture achievers.

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Across the NATION

'We won't allow ourselves to be arrested'

CALAMBA CITY—FORMER SENATOR AND RETIRED Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan and his co-accused in the rebellion charges filed by the government for the short-lived July 2003 Oakwood mutiny won't allow themselves to be arrested by authorities, one of his co-accused said yesterday.

Ernesto Marañon, spokesman of the Honasan-led Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. (PGBI), said he was in constant communication with the former lawmaker who returned to the government on the Holy Week weekend the alleged conspirator to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The lawyer-ex-navy officer is still in Manila while Marañon is on his mobile phone.

Citing security reasons, he was at first hesitant to take the call.

"We will fight it out with the government in the courts. But we have no intention of being arrested ... We are innocent of the charges filed against us," Marañon said.

He said he had already instructed his lawyer, Victor Lanting, to counter the charges and file countermotions, saying he had "good legal grounds to defend myself."

He then questioned the real intention of the arrest warrant which, he noted, was released at the height of Mrs Arroyo's declaration of State of Rebellion.

Marañon, like Honasan and their other co-accused, went into hiding immediately after a Makati City Regional Trial Court judge ordered their arrest last week.

The two—together with retired Gil. Virgilio Benoza, Col. Romeo Lacanilao, Capt. Billy Vallejo and Honasan's staff members George Ordoñez and Glen Rivera—are charged with conspiring with the junior officers who took over the posh Oakwood apartment hotel in Makati City to press for Mrs Arroyo's ouster.

Over 100 members of the 300,000-strong PGBI, who stopped in the Oakwood, were later identified by the government as the "civilian component" of the failed mutiny.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) order filed a map of their charge against Honasan last Feb. 28, instrument also for President declared a state of national emergency.

"The timing is very questionable. They want to pin down Gringo (Honasan) on old, trumped-up charges. They want to link us to the so-called new coup plot," Marañon has lamented.

He said their camp has filed several motions that asked the Department of Justice to immediately act on the rebellion charges against them.

He said despite that, the cases filed have disrupted and unsettled the DoJ until the recent coup rumors surfaced.

He, however, dismissed the option of running themselves to train arrest.

"We will still abide by our Constitution and continue our resolve to effect changes through non-violent means," he said.

Marañon then forbidden the intelligence operatives of the Philippine National Police for unnecessarily disturbing him in a retired colonel.

He said he was never part of any military or police organization.

Marañon was, in fact, a former leftist leader and a member of the old communist party headed by the late Jose Lava. Marlon Ramos, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

HONASAN

PHOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Onion prices high, but farmers lack supply

CAMARINES CITY—THE ILOCOS farm gate price of onions ranges from P10 to P20 a kilogram, which farmers considered to be high.

In the past, the price ranged from P4 to P6 a kg at this time of the year. Farmers said the buying price of P8 a kg is considered good as production can already earn enough basic for price.

But the problem is that local onion farmers do not have enough onion bulbs to sell this harvest season as rains and flash floods during the last week of January destroyed their crops.

Malabon and data collection report received by provincial agricultural livelihood basis showed that of the more than 10,000 hectares planted with onions this cropping season, only 6,200 hectares remained with standing crops after the rains and floods early this year.

A few days after the devastation, **no reports said the usual good harvest could not be expected because the underlying plans were weakened.**

The reports indicated that the total production output would only reach about 62,000 metric tons of onions of the yellow granules, red onions and "sandaying" onions.

This estimated volume is not even half of the usual 140,000 to 170,000 metric tons of harvest in Nueva Ecija during good weather, farmers and agriculture officials said.

Onion farmers contacted by the Inquirer said their margin of profits was small even at the current farm gate prices because their output went down and they spent more money for production expenses.

During good weather, farmers usually spend P65,000 to P70,000 per hectare for basic inputs and labor costs.

"The buying prices is really very high but we don't have much harvest to sell," said a farmer.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) has issued permits to at least four companies to import onions. Ana Rosa Roque, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

LEASE OF OFFICE SPACE INTENDED FOR THE PHILHEALTH REGIONAL OFFICE

DPWH blames rebels for road plan delays

LUZON CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways has finally admitted that the New People's Army's imposition of revolutionary taxes on road contractors has further delayed the progress of a P5.6-billion road project in Quezon.

Engineer Virgilio Casilla, DPWH official assigned to the project, made the admission before an inquiry of the provincial council on Monday on the delays of the road project initiated by Quezon Rep. Isabel Suarez way back in 1998 during the term of former President Estrada.

The proposed 54.1-km six-lane, horizontal road project, initially valued at P6.56 million, will pass through the towns of Infanta, Tayabas, Mauban and Sampaloc.

Casilla said the first construction, China Harbour Engineering Company, one of the biggest Chinese-owned construction firms, backed out of the project due to the "revolutionary" problem and delayed payment for the completed portion of the project.

"Based on the report that we received, the contractor cited as main reason the grave and earlier problems," Casilla explained.

He said the new contractor, Malaya Development Corp., also cited the same problems when it decided not to finish the project.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one of the DPWH officials present admitted to the board that the NPA's imposition of the revolutionary tax had forced the two companies to give up the project.

"The NPA demand was too high and the threat of destruction of heavy equipments plus the safety of the personnel is not guaranteed, so they left. We simply have to finish the project," the informant said.

However, Representative Suarez denied that the rebels impose any of the revolutionary tax was the main reason for the delay on the completion of the roadway. Jerry Esplanada, *Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau*

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ROUNDUP

3 killed by wayward truck

PEDRO CITY—A woman, her 3-year-old son and their neighbor were killed by a wayward cargo truck Monday morning in Barangay Tan, this city. The young Dominican Sisters died on the spot while his mother Jose, 30, and neighbor Maribel Sosa, 25, all of 0000 Block Mabuhayan Village, Barangay Tan, died later at the Barangay Tan Barangay College Hospital. The truck driver, Marcelino Cendaño, of Bagumbayan Subdivision in Barangay Mangagoy, surrendered to police. Investigator Lani Cuevas had custody of the driver's truck, which was loaded with cement at the time, while it was negotiating a hilly road in Barangay Kibbon. The victims were attending to the last mass and did not notice the approaching truck. The truck driver hit at a low road in order not to overtake to vehicle. Its owner is identified as Rodolfo Cendaño, P56,000 truck. The victims' families also asked the truck owner to shoulder the funeral expenses. Fabian Dilan, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

Firecracker hurts 4 studes

LIBAYANG, Pangasinan—Four student victims were hurt when a firecracker was tossed and hit them during the opening ceremonies of the Search Regional Athletic Association (SRAA) meet in this province. Police identified a lighted bomb (pillbox) as the group of Grade 6 pupils, Ali Nuna, Jose Mendoza, 13, Juanito Garcia Jr., 12, and Jeanne Agna, 14, while they were watching the lighting of the Palarong Pambansa torch. Reports said the spoke from the exploding firecracker hit Agna in the eyes and right ear. Garcia in the chest and Agna in the left eye. A team from the Philippine National Red Cross gave first aid treatment before they were taken to a hospital. Yolanda Catalo-Fuertes, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Security exec, pref killed

CORDERO CITY—A security agency manager and a college professor were separately killed here Monday night. Senior Insp. Samson Chong, police station 2 commander, identified the victim as Professor Ali Lagunday of the University of Mindanao-Cordero College. Chong said the victim was heading for home from the office in a jeep when one of the passengers pulled a gun and shot him. An investigation, Rolando Mendoza, manager of Heaven Security Agency, was also killed by still unidentified gunmen along Liz Memorial Avenue. Police said Mendoza was also heading home when he was shot. Investigators are trying to determine if the two incidents are linked. Jude Pantaleón, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Free phone lines for cops

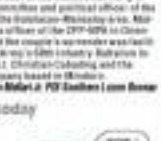
GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Bayan Telecommunications (Baytel) has provided free telephone lines to at least six police precincts here and another one in the office of the city police chief, for total calls worth P50,000 a month. Baytel is also maintaining areas and under Ray Rogers, head of Baytel's Customer Access Network, said providing free telephone connection to the city police is part of the company's effort to fulfill its corporate social responsibility. Jaime Zaide, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NPA caught yielding

LUCENA CITY—A couple, both allegedly ranking members of the communist New People's Army operating in Bicolabd Mindoro, surrendered to the police and military here on Monday. The NPA duo's identities Lucas Dalmasad based in Santa Rakar announcement. Dalmasa aided by Samuel Pedro Dalaupy Jr. identified the couple-aided returnees as Genesis "Ka Sebastian" Eastern Dr., and Gina nee "Ka Mae sara" Mandag, 22. Both were included in the military's order of battle. The military reported said Castillo as a key commander of Front 4A of the Philippines-NPA provincial committee and political officer of the NPA as tried to propaganda report in the Batalaan-Mamburao area. Mandagnan identified as the logistics officer of the CPP-NPA in Occidental Mindoro. The report added that the couple's surrender was facilitated by the joint operations of the army's 16th Infantry Battalion led by Philippine Army Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Cabadong and the Joint MP-PNP Civil Relations Company based in Mindoro. Delfin Mallari Jr, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Agustalde birthday today

THE 131st birth anniversary of General Emilio Aguinaldo, president of the First Philippine Republic, will be commemorated today during rites at his mansion in Kawit, Cavite. A civic parade, flag raising and wreath-offering have been lined up for the day. The parade starts at 9 a.m. at the municipal hall in Poblacion, Kawit and will end at the Aguinaldo Shrine, according to a news release.



MAKING FACES
Two girls belonging to the Tagbanua tribe of Malita, Davao del Sur appear to be amazed at each other's faces as they start classes being held by the Department of Education in their village.

DAR prepares to take over co-op property over ₱17-M loan

By Jaen Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SILA, CAMARINES SUR—THE Department of Agrarian Reform is preparing to take over a 468-hectare property of an agrarian reform community that has been organized into a cooperative, according to a government lawyer.

Antonio M. Cabatac Jr., DAR-Camarines Sur legal division chief, said the Peneseta Development Cooperative Inc. (PDCI), composed of more than 300 farming families, would be forced to turn over the contested property to the government once the court lifted the temporary restraining order (TRO) on foreclosure proceedings that should have been completed in December last year.

Failed to pay

Cabatac said the PDCI failed to pay the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) a ₱5.million debt acquired on May 17, 2005. The amount has ballooned to ₱17 million.

The loan was taken from the DBP's Special Projects Agro-Industrial Area Funds channeled through the CBP.

Cabatac said foreclosure proceedings on the PDCI property had been stalled because of a court order that the cooperative obtained on Dec. 27, 2005, a day before the scheduled auction sale.

Stalling

Following the issuance of the TRO, the PDCI, through its assistant Glen Baldivia, maneuvered by filing a civil case against the DAR and the DBP that sought to annul the deed of assignment.

Court records showed that the PDCI argued that it could not be made to pay the DBP loan because the transaction was entered into by a group called the People's Coalition for Unity and Agrarian Reform Programs (Pecoauria) and not by the PDCI.

Baldivia submitted in court the argument that Pecoauria and the PDCI were "separate and distinct" and that the loan was not authorized by the cooperative.

No authority

The loan was entered into by a certain Elben Arroyo and Alicia Rivarez, Pecoauria president and treasurer, respectively.

But Baldivar said Arroyo and Rivarez were not authorized by the PDCI to execute a "subsidiary to chattel mortgage and the mortgage contract," saying Pecoauria and the PDCI were one and the same entity.

A previous Cadastre court order, Sept. 29, 2000 said that without a board resolution issued by the PDCI giving authority to Pecoauria as well as Arroyo and Rivarez, the mortgage executed by the Pecoauria and signed by Arroyo and Rivarez was void from the start.

Same entity

Defending the arguments of the PDCI counsel, Caballero said records of the Cooperative Development Authority showed that Pecoauria and PDCI were just one entity and that Arroyo and Rivarez were duly authorized with Board Resolution No. 04 in 1995 that authorized them to execute the mortgage contract.

The petition of the PDCI counsel the mortgage contract is still pending in court.

Kin seek return of body of OFW killed in Saudi

LUCENA CITY—THE FAMILY OF an overseas Filipino worker who was killed in a road accident in Saudi Arabia last month has appealed for government help for the immediate return of his body.

"We have already spent the traditional nine-day prayers, and are nearing the customary 40-day bereavement and yet the body of our mom is still nowhere, still in his lonesome place in a far away land," Simeona Macay, mother of Ronald, 22, said in a phone interview.

"Why do we have to wait for so long? We never told that the Philippine Embassy in Saudi Arabia is still completing the papers. But for how long will we wait and wait our mother," she said crying and her voice cracking.

The Macays live in Mulanay town in the Bondoc Peninsula area.

On Feb. 23, the young OFW was not seen by a speeding car being driven by a Saudi national, while he was crossing the street in front of a pizza restaurant where he was working in Riyadh.

He died on the spot.

Simeona said the suspect was later arrested by the police.

Ronald left for Saudi Arabia on Nov. 29 last year to help his parents.

He applied at the Tiaras recruitment agency in Sariaya, Pandayan City, to enthuse for a ₱20,000 placement fee, he was able to get employment as a service crewman of Pizza Hut being managed by United Food Corp. with a salary of ₱12,000 to ₱15,000/a month.

"Troy (Ronald's nickname) was our only source here so we are so confuse. He was about to cross the street when he was bumped by the speeding car," Simeona said.

She said her son had been making his presence felt in the absence of all family members.

"He was the eldest of my four children. He was so kind and loving to all his siblings. We all could feel in our dreams that Onos wanted to go home," Simeona said.

To ease the pain of losing a child and the seeming storied wait for the return of his body, Simeona said the whole clan had been praying every night and holding vigils as they awaited the return of Ronald's body.

"There's always a lighted candle before the altar to remind us of Ronald," he said.

When the Inquirer contacted the head office of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Romulo Quizon, its administrative assistant, said the Philippine Embassy had been exerting all efforts for the immediate repatriation of Ronald's body.

"There are still some problems on the flight details and some required documents that the DFA in Saudi Arabia is doing its best," he said.

However, the department could not give an exact date on the return of the body. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Pope extends term of Cardinal Vidal as archbishop of Cebu

By Rumela Nayahangan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS EXtended the tenure of Ricardo Cardinal Vidal as archbishop of Cebu despite of his desire to retire.

Vidal, who turned 75 in February, said he accepted the decision of the Pope with joy.

The Holy Father's decision, contained in a letter to Archbishop Vidal by Papal Nuncio Antonio Franco, was read on Tuesday during the Mass celebrating Vidal's 50th anniversary as a priest held at the Metropolitan Cebu Water District auditorium.

The Mass was attended by hundreds of priests from different dioceses in the country including Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales and Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Bishop Angel Lagdameo of Iligan.

Vidal said he did not know until when he would continue to lead the Cebu Archdiocese.

But Msgr. Esteban Binghay the Cebu Archdiocese's Episcopal Vicar, said that based on the letter read by Vidal, the Pope had extended his tenure until further notice or until a new replacement was named.

Binghay said priests in Cebu were glad that the oath against Vidal would continue as head the Catholic Church here.

Vidal had announced during his 75th birthday on Feb. 6 that he had already filed his retirement paper.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

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(*Sgd.*) **ROLANDO G. ANDAYA, JR.**
Secretary
Department of Budget and Management

Donations keep coming in for Guinsaugon

By Jeni Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN CITY – DONATIONS CONtinued to pour in for victims of the Guinsaugon landslide, which left over 1,000 people dead, nearly a month since it happened.

Most of the donations are in kind, particularly housing units for the survivors and evacuees from other villages considered geologically hazardous by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

Other donations are in the form of scholarships for the surviving minors, said Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias.

The governor said the province also received cash donations amounting to P5.2 million and $20,000. She said the $20,000 cash donated by the Korean Church Relief Team's (KORT) had been set aside for housing units for the survivors. The group, she said, wanted the amount used solely for the construction of about 20 houses.

"We have been transparent in our dealings with the donations. Anyone can look into it because all were receipted. The donors would not have trusted us if we have been remiss with it," said Lerias, in reaction to queries about the donations.

She said that aside from the goods, there were all the cash the province received. "Other donations were already in the local government of St. Bernard. Others were routed through different NGOs (non-government organizations), like the Red Cross," said Lerias.

She said only 350 housing units were needed for the survivors "But with the donations that are pouring in, we can build at least 1,000 units for the evacuees from other barangays."

The other evacuees came from Guinsaugon's neighboring villages of Ampiton, Magatas, Sogopon, Nyalog, and Nuevo Rosario. Local officials have asked residents living along the slopes of these barangays to leave as they were also at risk of becoming victims of landslides, particularly because Mt. Kan-abag had remained unstable.

"If the donations from benevolent donors keep coming, that's a choice that other landslide-threatened communities in the province, like Liloan, San Francisco, Bontoc, Sogod and Macrohon, envy. Maasin City would benefit from these donations," Lerias said.

She added that "Ipilan Kontribusyon," which was launched last week to monitor the victims' rehabilitation, would coordinate with St. Bernard's "Gabay Sa Bernard," in undertaking the housing project.

St. Bernard Mayor Maria Lin said a 0.3 hectare lot had been acquired in Barangay Magbagobog for 85 families, scholarships from such donations.

VIGILANCE PENDING ISSUE
Higaonon tribal leaders from Barangay Dalipan in Bukidnon hold a thanksgiving ritual in front of the Bayanihang Cathedral in Manolo Fortaleza after the filing of a petition seeking to stop an Australian firm from mining in the province.

DOJ asked: Charge mayor in publisher's slay

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO... relatives of a publisher killed in Aurora on May 18, 2005 have asked the Department of Justice to charge still mum Baguio Mayor Jaime Fresnis as the "mastermind."

Nestor Mendoza and Rosebelle Cruz, sister and daughter respectively, of Marlino Teves Reyneke publisher Philip Agustin, made the appeal in a motion for reconsideration they filed at the office of Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño.

The motion, received by the DOJ on March 1, came after Secretary Raul Gonzalez (retired) Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Arturo Lomibao and Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr. (retired) PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group chief, all members of the Arroyo Cabinet, inhibited themselves from the case.

Mendoza, however, recommended the further investigation of Fresnis and other suspects in the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police.

Fresnis welcomed a new investigation into his alleged involvement in the murder but strongly denied having a role in it, mark his unwavering faith in the justice system.

The relatives of Agustin, he said, were allowing themselves to be used by his political opponents.

In their motion, Mendoza and Cruz cited several issues Fresnis should be made to primarily answer for the killing.

They said Agustin's exposé on alleged anomalous transactions, which Starbloc reported in its May 2-8 special issue, prompted a hostile reaction from the mayor.

Cruz also narrated that two of the three accused, Nilo "Boyet" Morvis and Manuel Aduig, were seen accompanying Fresnis some few days before Agustin started publishing the exposé.

Mendoza and Cruz said Fresnis, a former town police chief and vice mayor, "has the capability to order the execution of Agustin."

Fresnis, they added, should consider the statements of witness Roy Cimarra who claimed that Bebong Bautista, identified as a right hand man of the mayor, called up Cimarra to say, "Don't make issue about this because you know how Enering Adamos works."

They told the prosecutor that Cimarra was Bautista's "bit man doing dirty jobs for Mayor Fresnis." They gave Bautista a copy of an arrest warrant for Adriano for another murder case.

In support of the testimony of accomplice-turned witness Reynaldo Oliveros, Mendoza and Cruz also gave copies of daily time records showing that the three were charged with the murder were town government employees and directly supervised by the mayor. Fresnis's signature were affixed in their records, the copies showed.

Morvis confirmed that the three suspects used to work at the town government but pointed out that he did not maintain a private army.

Councilor Mirla Tiaty, in the motion submitted by Agustin's relatives, said that a day before Agustin's murder, the mayor called her to his office.

There, she said, he expressed his anger over Agustin's stories and how direct had been mocking his reputation. She said before she left the room, the mayor warned that his critics should better "be tough and strong."

Loren says she'll work for 'legit' president

BAGUIO CITY – FORMER SEN. Loren Legarda said she would work with her as "legitimate president" should she win in her present canvassing results of the vice presidential race in 2004.

Legarda said the latest exposés about election officials predetermining election returns could explain Vice President Noli de Castro's 2 percent (698,000 votes) lead in the 2004 count and might well allow him to claim the vice presidential post.

But she said she did not know what kind of working relationship she would have with President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose she accused of cheating alongside De Castro.

"That's a difficult question. Maybe I shouldn't answer you ... I will work with legitimately elected presidents," she said.

The Supreme Court has been deliberating on three separate Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) protests filed against Arroyo by De Castro camp stating the 2004 polls.

"We were able to reclaim some electoral returns (from) Southern Leyte and Negros Occidental, which were never opened. (This meant that) those were the authentic returns that were never counted ... and those were from provinces where [actor Fernando Poe Jr.] and I supposedly lost," Legarda said here on Tuesday.

"When these were opened before we were open, those [returns] showed a 70:30 margin in our favor," she said.

Legarda said she is also not worried about military reaction should the senate allow her to assume the vice presidency or even the presidency if Ms. Arroyo steps down.

She said military rebels did not assume coup against former President Corazon Aquino and Ms Arroyo because they were women.

"Rightist rebels attacked in 1989 because democracy was fragile during Cory's term, while military cannot today continue to be coup-prone because [Ms Arroyo's] legitimacy. The military is not chauvinist. I am a lieutenant colonel (in the reserve force) so I would like to believe the military is not [chauvinist]," she said. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

1,000 flee homes to escape AFP-NPA clashes in Samar

By Joey A. Gobiero
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—MILITARY OFFENsives against communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the past two weeks have sent over 1,000 people fleeing from their homes in at least four hinterland villages in Samar province, a nongovernment group based here reported.

Gaudencio Rafols, rights center advocate for peace, yesterday in Zumbodongo del Norte, Mountain Occidental and Bataan.

Jasmin Arnoldon, executive director of the Leyte Center for Development, said 90 families or 500 people from three farming villages in Morong, Samar, had sought refuge in a public elementary school and in relatives' homes in Sumagay Calbiga, 17 km from the town center.

In the nearby town of San Jose de Buan, about 30 families or 160 individuals from Sitio Sinapupan Pinglay are now housed at the municipal hall, Arnoldon said.

Military authorities have identified Morong and San Jose de Buan as among the "hotbeds" of communist insurgency in the province.

The fighting yesterday cited in reports Brig. Gen. Bonifacio Ramos, head of the Army's 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan, Samar, to verify the development agency's report. He did not respond to cellular phone calls and text messages.

Col. Alfredrick Arambulo, spokesperson of the General Command based in Cebu City, also failed to answer mobile phone calls and text messages.

Jerusalem said her group on Tuesday conducted food relief operations for the evacuees. In Morong, 37 families or 222 persons left their homes to barangay San Andres; 35 families or 186 persons in Biri, and 30 families or 188 persons in Basey.

Soldiers of the Army's 19th Infantry Battalion led by Col. Cherrito Dido and based in San Jorge town, also in Samar, have been conducting counterinsurgency operations in these villages, she said.

"The people are afraid to return to their villages for fear of their lives. They could not remain their fields and normal activities for fear that they will be affected by the ongoing military operations by the military," Jerusalem said in the interim.

"While we cannot really deny that there is armed conflict going on in the area, the operations conducted by the military must be done in such a way that civilians will not be affected or disturbed," she added.

Earlier, about 1,000 people fled the villages of Trejillo, J.R. Austria, Kalinedan, E. Duran and Sarmiento to Bobon town, Northern Samar, on March 6 to four of being caught in the conflict between government soldiers and NPA members. They stayed in the municipal hall.

Vicky Dato, Bobon's local operations officer, said the evacuees had returned to their homes on March 15.

On Monday, an NPA group clashed with a military patrol for 14 minutes in Barangay Yakas in Dolod, Zumbodongo del Norte, resulting in one soldier being killed, according to Brig. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, head of the Army's 1st Army Infantry Division.

In Misamis Occidental, about 15 rebels disguised as soldiers stormed a police station in Sapang Bulaga town at 3:15 p.m. on Monday, disarmed four policemen and took at least five M-16 rifles and three handguns, said Chief Supt. Hosanto Bagtalo, Northern Mindanao police chief. With reports from Dennis Baguio, Herwen Atiko Cruz and Apolito Zenda, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Greg Bituin Jr., PDI Central Luzon Desk; and Nestor Burgos Jr. and Florence Hilot-Jaurey, PDI Visayas Bureau

Anakpawis leader tags Army man in ambush

Front page 1

that security forces were behind the wave of attacks around the country that have killed more than 100 activists or their relatives since 2001.

Makabayang pledged to act on the killings.

"There is a standing order for the (police) to act on these killings of militant leaders and to identify and arrest the culprits," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said. "We cannot allow this murder trend to undermine peace and order. We assure the families of the victims that no crime will be left untried in the conduct of the probes."

The critically wounded Amante Abalos, coordinator for Anakpawis in Zamboanga, did not give any names but said one of the gunmen was "familiar" to him, according to initial investigations.

Abalos, a barangay councilman in the Zamboanga town of San Marcelino and vice chair of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon (AMGL), a provincial chapter, was described by doctors as in stable condition.

He is being treated at the James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital in Olongapo City.

Dr. Armando Ogoris and Abalos was not completely out of danger as he had sustained at least 14 bullet wounds, one of them in the chest.

Abalos was among the latest victims of the attacks on militants. On Sunday, Bicol University student Cris Hugo was shot dead in Legazpi City in Albay while strolling home with a professor.

Several policemen are guarding Abalos in the hospital to prevent any attempt by his attackers to finish him off, officials said.

Ayala Corporation

Ayala Land, Inc.

Ayala Foundation, Inc.

Ayala Museum

Ayala Center

Ayala Triangle

Ayala Avenue

Ayala Alabang

Ayala Alabang Village

Ayala Alabang Village Association

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approval

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approval Signature

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approval Signature Witness

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approval Signature Witness Notary

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approval Signature Witness Notary Public

Ayala Alabang Village Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Approval Signature Witness Notary Public Commission

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Erap confirms US notice of bugging

OUSTED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA said yesterday he has been notified by an American court that US authorities had bugged his telephone conversations with a former FBI analyst charged with illegally revealing EU government secrets.

Estrada has previously acknowledged receiving American government assessments of Philippine political events from Leandro Aragoncillo, who has been accused of illegally downloading confidential US information and passing it to other people while working as an FBI intelligence analyst.

Estrada told The Associated Press he has received a notice from a New Jersey court, which released him that some of his telephone conversation with Aragoncillo had been wiretapped by US authorities.

The notice indicated that the wiretapping, done in the course of investigating Aragoncillo, was authorized by the New Jersey court, Estrada said. There was no indication that he was being investigated by US authorities, he added.

"The notice said that my telephone calls with Aragoncillo were wiretapped," Estrada said in a telephone interview. "The wiretapping was authorized by the court."

Michael Drewniak, spokesman for the US Attorney's Office in Newark, New Jersey, has refused to comment on wiretapping, which was first reported by the Inquirer.

"Even if that were so, I would not comment on it," he said last week.

Aragoncillo, a 21-year Marine veteran who became an FBI intelligence analyst in 2004, was arrested in the US last year. He has been charged with conspiring to reveal government secrets, acting as a foreign agent and improperly using FBI computers. Those charges carry a maximum sentence of 23 years.

He has not been charged with espionage, which carries a maximum penalty of capital punishment.

Estrada was toppled on charges of corruption in 2001 and has been on trial since then. He was scheduled to take the witness stand today.

He has acknowledged conversing with Aragoncillo by telephone and receiving US government documents on the political situation in the Philippines, but he played down their value, saying the assessments were similar to those reported by Philippine newspapers.

Asked if he felt offended by the US action, Estrada replied: "My reaction is nothing, because even before this, I have admitted that I've talked with him. ... [and] that those details were nothing more than newspapers accounts of what's happening in the country."

Estrada said he met Aragoncillo when he visited the United States while he was still President and was introduced to him and other White House staffers of Filipino descent. Their friendship blossomed, with Aragoncillo visiting him at Makalintang and the military hospital where he was previously detained. AP

ESTRADA

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Why the silence? PCGG asked

MALACAÑANG ADMINISTRATION SEN. ARTHUR AQUINO yesterday wound the "business silence" of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) over the plan of businessman Edgardo "Dooding" Cojuangco, Jr. to sell P6 billion worth of contested San Miguel Corp. "B" shares.

"Why is the PCGG cautiously silent about the move of Ambassador Cojuangco for permission to sell 73 million San Miguel shares that is claimed by the government?" Aquino said in a statement.

Aquino said the PCGG should immediately oppose Cojuangco's petition before the Sandiganbayan to sell 73 million SMC shares to pay off the loans incurred by 34 accused-linked companies.

The anti-graft court has set a hearing on the case tomorrow. The 73 million shares represent 13.33 percent of the 550 million SMC shares held by companies that the government, through the PCGG, sequestered in 1986 and 1987.

"PCGG cannot allow this motion to go unchallenged. Why should San Miguel shares that is being claimed by the government be used to pay off the P6 billion loans of sequestered companies?" Aquino said.

Nine of the sequestered companies owe P5.34 billion in loans to the United Coconut Planters Bank. Philip C. Tubeo

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ BI can't catch money launderers without mission order A2

■ HNDA cracks down on QC bankers A3

■ 4 hurt in Roxas Blvd. road mishap A2

POLICE yesterday raided a house in Quiapo equipped with a surveillance camera and believed to be the center of a thriving illegal drugs trade in the area. A suspect who tried to escape was killed in a shootout that followed the raid. BOY SANTOS

Man killed in Quiapo drug bust

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MANILA POLICEMEN UNCOVERED A flourishing drug den in the middle of a depressed community in Quiapo, Manila, early yesterday morning, and killed a suspect who tried to escape.

The police said they seized P7.3 million worth of shabu and arrested suspect Jaime Jamile the two-story house at 14 Fraternal Street.

Supt. Romulo Espinola, Manila Police District (MPD) Station 3 chief, said his men had to use acetylene torches in breaking down the iron steel doors protecting the small alley which led to the tavern where the alleged drug den was located.

A surveillance camera had been installed above one of the doors, allowing the drug dealers to spot possible police operatives attempting to conduct a raid in the area, Espinola added.

Police were able to seize three kilos of suspected methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu with an estimated street value of P7.3 million during the raid.

They also arrested six persons they found inside the house: Jennifer De Leon, 20; Pilar Espinobella, 72; Estelito Rosello, 38; Amado Cortez Jr., 49; Jaime Magkajit, 38; and Angelito dela Cruz, 49, all of Quiapo, Manila, now face drug charges.

A seventh suspect, 20-year-old Jessie Lloyd Salgado, was shot to death after allegedly engaging the policemen in a shootout.

"They seem to scout time for its drug activities," Espinola said, adding that two MPE operatives were killed during an operation in the area many years ago.

Armed with a search warrant, the policemen conducted the raid at 6:30 a.m. Espinola said three suspects, including Salgado, were able to leave the house while the MPD operatives were breaking down the doors.

MPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza later inspected the house after the raid. It was during this time that Salgado attempted to run out of the house on the first floor was locked.

When responding policemen broke down the door, they saw two other unidentified suspects and Salgado, who had apparently gone back to the house.

"Thinking that the police had already left, the suspects jumped out of the window and quickly rounded a bend leading to a nearby creek.

Policemen were after the three, and killed Salgado in a shootout that followed, Espinola said. "We are now tracing the whereabouts of the other suspects," the police official added.

Death threats all in family

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE WIFE OF ASSASSINATED businessman Leonardo Uindo yesterday said she could recognize some of the men who killed her husband last Thursday.

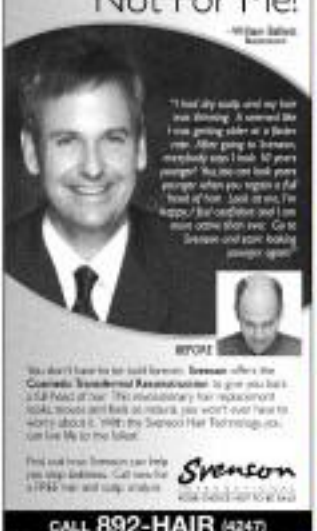
In a phone interview with the Inquirer, Clarissa said some of the suspects "looked familiar."

But she refused to give further details as she expressed fear for the safety of a vital witness, her children and lawyers. "Our lawyers are already getting death threats," she said.

Clarissa added she had also asked her two sons to leave the city as they, too, had received threats. Clarissa said her daughter were about to leave the Hotel Plaza Building on Pearl Drive with Uindo last Thursday when four men approached her husband and shot him at close range. Uindo's executives, Renato Gatcon, who was with him, died in the hospital on Saturday night.

Clarissa said earlier that apart from the four suspects, she also saw three others who could have acted as lookouts. Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino, the head of Task Force Uindo, said they would look into the possibility that there could be more than four killers.

Clarissa had accused Bureau of Customs Deputy Commissioner Gen. Luis "Chavit" Singson as the mastermind of the killing, an allegation he had quickly denied.



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No arrest without mission order from BI

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) cannot arrest just any foreigner believed to be engaged in prohibited economic like small-scale lending businesses without a mission order from the immigration commissioner.

And before BI intelligence operatives can get a mission order, they have to verify a formal complaint against a foreigner or validate tips from informants.

Fidel Tranda, the bureau's intelligence chief, yesterday said that BI operatives also conduct their own monitoring and data gathering on aliens' illegal activities, after which the operatives submit an intelligence report that would be used as a basis for the mission order.

"We can't just go arresting any foreigner. We can't move against people without a mission order," Tranda said in a phone interview. "We have no follow-up process because otherwise, we would be the one subjected to many complaints."

Tranda made the statements when asked about the bureau's response to reports that foreigners have been engaging in the 'five-six' lending business, wherein the borrowers, usually Filipinos, are charged higher than the usual interest rates.

He added that the BI does not allow its operatives to conduct arrests based on their own information without first getting a mission order from the commissioner so arrests that their actions would be absurdum.

"That could be abused if we allow everybody to do that," Tranda said.

Rather, BI executive director Roy Almonte said engaging in social trade reserved for Filipinos could be a ground for deportation against foreigners.

He added that aliens must follow the requirements of the Retail Trade Liberalization Act, which prescribes the capital requirement for foreigners who want to engage in business in the country.

BOAT WATCHING
A biker makes a brief stop along Roxas Boulevard to look at the sailboats drifting on Manila Bay.

"Asian Brand Strategy: A New Boardroom Paradigm"
by Martin Roll
Author of "Asian Brand Strategy"

"Building a Culture of Innovation"
by Tony Fernandes
President
AirAsia

"The Brand as the Central Operating Principle"
by Joerg Breuer
President
BMW Philippines

"The Art of Innovation"
by Rene Almendras
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MetroBriefs

Crackdown on barkers

NINE barkers were apprehended on major intersections in Quezon City over the weekend, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) announced yesterday. In a statement, the MMDA said the barkers — men soliciting for passengers for jeepneys, buses and UV Expre — were accosted for violating an MMDA resolution penalizing a Quezon City ordinance which prohibits the loading of passengers at illegal terminals. The nine were apprehended at the intersections along Edsa, Santolan Road, Aurora Boulevard and Kamias Road, by operatives of the MMDA's hazards and intelligence office (HIO). They were fined P110 each before their release. "We are duty-bound to criminalize the traffic problem in Metro Manila but we be accused of condoning the hiring (of) barkers," said MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

Sara F. Delacruzaid

Junk shop owner killed

Two men shot dead a businessman yesterday morning inside his junk shop in Pasig City, Jose Zafe, 36, died of a gunshot wound on the head and body, police reported yesterday. Pasig City police chief Senior Supt. Romeo Maxing said they have not yet established any motive behind the killing but investigators told the reporter that the two men had tried to extort money from the victim. Police said Zafe was in his house on Market Avenue, where he also maintained a junk shop, when the suspects barged inside and allegedly demanded money. When Zafe refused to give them money, one of the suspects pointed out a handgun. The victim was shot twice when he tried to grab the firearm. The killers quickly rushed out of the compound, got on a motorcycle and fled. Relatives brought Zafe to the Pasig City General Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

Edward D. Tanaon Jr.

QC cares for senior citizens

QUEZON City has opened up with a health care provider to help the city's elderly protect themselves from common ailments like pneumonia and the flu. The city's Office for Senior Citizens Affairs and the Home Health Care, a multi-disciplinary group of doctors, nurses, therapists and caregivers, will conduct a series of health lectures and consultations for senior citizens. The HHC will also offer special services for seniors against pneumonia, hepatitis A and B, and tetanus. Free cervical screening and consultation to determine and control sugar level or blood pressure will also be available, according to OIC-Vice Mayor Gerald Belmonte. The lectures and consultations will be held in different areas in the city. The schedule, however, has yet to be announced.

JV Tan

A hurt in road mishap

FOUR passengers of an FX taxi were hurt after the car overturned after hitting an island in Pasay City yesterday. The taxi, which was headed for Cubao, Quezon City, had just gotten off the Buendia flyover on Roxas Boulevard when it suddenly swerved to the left and hit the center island. When the driver, Jacinto B. Sobrevega, tried to the wheel to the right, "this caused the vehicle to turn turtle once and land on its left side," SPO2 Victorino Salazar told the reporter. Sobrevega and his four passengers, identified as Miriam Dionisio, Feminiano Sampaguin, Joseph Felipe and Crispin Torres, were rushed to the San Juan De Dios Hospital where they were treated for their wounds. Dionisio, the investigator said, has sustained a fractured leg. Sobrevega said the driver will be charged with reckless imprudence.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Navotas summer program

THE NAVOTAS government has lined up several activities to keep the youth busy this summer. The program, dubbed "Kinga sa Kabataan," features a free sports clinic and an arts workshop from April 3 - May 14. The sports clinic offers karatedo, taekwondo, arnis and swimming lessons while instructors from the Philippine Karatedo Federation (PKF) will conduct the workshop for aiming, dancing, and karate drawing and painting will be conducted by instructors and graduates from the Philippine Education Theater Association. "It is one way for everybody, particularly the youth, to spend their summer vacation productively," Mayor Tobby Tiangco said. Interested applicants may apply at the Public Information Office in the Navotas Municipal Hall or contact Jerry Bishop or Jonell Lopez at 282-1012 or 281-8002.

The WORLD

Julie Laurente B. Dizon

French unions call for general strike

PARIS—FRENCH UNIONS AND STUDENT BODIES called on Monday for a general strike and protest marches on March 28 to pressure the government to withdraw a job law they say will create insecurity for a generation of young workers.

"All the unions are calling to make March 28 a day of demonstrations, strikes and work stoppages," said Bernard Thibault, confederal secretary of the Force Ouvrière union after a meeting of France's main unions, student and high school groups.

The large public sector was expected to join the one day stoppage in force but it was not immediately clear how the strike would affect the private sector.

"In the public sector there will be a 24-hour strike and in the private sector there will be flexible work stoppages," said Gerard Aschieri, secretary general of United Union Federation.

Despite nationwide protest marches over the weekend, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin has stood firm on the First Job Contract (CPE) law but also called for dialogue to improve it.

The field meetings with students and employers on Monday to discuss their concerns and pressure the law.

French President Jacques Chirac on Monday backed his prime minister over the law, which allows employers to fire people under 26 for any reason during a two-year trial period.

Chirac said the CPE showed the government's willingness to fight youth unemployment, which stands at 23 percent in France, more than twice the national rate.

"The challenge... is to open a constructive and confident dialogue in this spirit which can allow improving the CPE," Chirac told a news conference with Jordan's King Abdullah.

"I know this is the prime minister's and the government's willing man and I can only approve of it," Chirac said. There was no immediate government reaction to the walkout.

Opposition to the law has provoked a crisis for Villepin, which could harm his chances of running for president in 2007 and damage the ruling UMP party.

Opinion polls show his popularity has slumped in recent weeks and a poll for the RTL organization on Monday showed that 61 percent of French voters want the law withdrawn.

Student groups and union leaders say the CPE would create a generation of disposable workers without job security.

"The government must have the wisdom to get out of this impasse which it has imposed on itself. It must withdraw the CPE," said a statement by unions after Monday's decision, adding that only its withdrawal would open the way to negotiations. Reuters

Australia starts cyclone cleanup

BINGIL BAY, AUSTRALIA—AUSTRALIA'S northeast coast picked up the pieces on Tuesday after a cyclone with winds topping 200 kph ripped roofs off homes, decimated the nation's sugar and banana crops and uprooted trees.

Astonishingly, there were no deaths and only minor injuries as Cyclone Larry, one of Australia's most powerful cyclones, left a trail of destruction along 300 km of coast south of the tourist resort of Cairns on Monday morning.

The maximum category five storm may have cut new sugar production by the world's third-largest exporter by 500,000 tons, or 10 percent, while about 90 percent of Australia's banana production was also believed to have been wiped out, industry groups said.

But as emergency services, troops and local communities surveyed the damage from Larry, another storm, Cyclone Willy, was brewing about 1,000 km east of Cairns at category two strength, Australia's Bureau of Cyclone Warning Center said.

"It is moving towards the west at 20 kph and should gradually intensify over the next 12 hours. Willy is expected to maintain this track until Wednesday morning when it will slow down and remain in offshore waters for the rest of the week," the center said on its website, www.bom.gov.au.

Queensland state Premier Peter Beattie said the recovery from Monday's cyclone would be "long and slow" and that it would take three to seven basic services. Hundreds of telephone were being delivered to affected areas to make basic calls.

Speaking from the sugar-growing town of Innisfail, just south of Cairns, which took the full force of the storm, Beattie praised emergency services and local communities and said delivering food, clean water and power generators was a priority. Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

Bush won't abandon Iraq

CLEVELAND—President George W. Bush vowed on Monday not to abandon Iraq and tried to counter fears among Americans that the continuing killing, Iraqi and US forces was unproductive and futile. Bush insisted progress was being made but said it remained an uphill battle. "In the days of our troops reports about killings and reprisals, I understand how some Americans have had their confidence shaken," Bush said. "They wonder what I see that they don't." AFP

Pressure on Belarus leader

MINSK—Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko faced growing Western criticism Tuesday over his clinching of a third term in office as protesters camped for the eighth weekend to carry on fighting for an annulment of presidential election results. The United States, which has called Belarus "Europe's last dictatorship," said it "cannot accept as legitimate the election results" and would consider, in consultation with European partners, new sanctions on the hostile regime. AFP

FBI agent's 9/11 warning

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia—An FBI agent testified Monday that he warned his superiors about Zacarias Moussaoui 10 times before the Sept. 11 attacks, and asked those he blamed to block an action against Agent Harry Samit, who arrested Moussaoui, also admitted that he accused his superiors of "criminal negligence" and "obstruction" in a US government inquiry into 9/11. Testifying in a civil case for damages, the FBI agent was shown a memo he sent to FBI headquarters in Washington on Aug. 18, 2001, parts of which were sent across the federal government, in which he referred to Moussaoui 17 times, in the document, Samit warned the Pentagon was warning time to steer a 747-400-airliner, had a portable GPS navigation system, was an electric fundamentalist, and was armed with small knives and learning martial arts. AFP

Iranian nuclear crisis

NEW YORK—Top officials from Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States wrapped up more than four hours of talks on the Iranian nuclear crisis here Monday but failed to agree on a clear strategy to curb Tehran into foregoing nuclear arms. Participants, however, agreed to continue the discussions, including the issue of a Franco-British statement now before the UN Security Council that calls on Iran to comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) demand that it suspend uranium enrichment. "We have more work to do," said a source in Western and Chinese objections to the sanctions advocated by the Western powers, said a Western diplomat who asked not to be named. AFP

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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BAP reinstatement not an option–POC

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Gaudioso's explosive comeback zaps rivals A30
■ Japan smears Cuban regulo A32

By Jaymiee W. Pago

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION of the Philippines' demand for reinstatement is an "old issue being rehashed" and the Philippine Olympic Committee insists it isn't going to give in.

The position came yesterday on the heels of the BAP announcement Monday that it will file a case against the local Olympic body in the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) this month.

"We are no longer talking about reinstatement," said POC media liaison chief Joey Romasanta. "This issue has already been overtaken by events. It has already been overtaken by the formation of a new federation."

BAP president Joey Lina's claims that the POC illegally expelled the 84-year-old cage body disappointed POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Romasanta said.

COJUANGCO

"I talked to him and he is dismayed that an old issue is being rehashed," said Romasanta. "Mr. Lina already seemed talking with the stakeholders. He already talked about forming a new [federation]. He was actively participating, he was not talking about reinstatement sequence."

Romasanta said the BAP "can go wherever they want."

The POC expelled the BAP here last year.

In a statement released yesterday, the BAP claimed that its bid to regain membership is an issue the POC Court's dealt with for months.

Lina said the POC has yet to follow a favorable ruling by a regional trial court that ordered the reinstatement of the BAP.

"The POC did not comply with the order," the statement read. "Had the POC complied with the court order, then the suspension on the Philippines could have been lifted by Fiba, thus enabling the Philippines to participate in Fiba-sanctioned tournaments."

The POC is already prepared to seek Fiba's recognition of Philippine Basketball, the new federation backed by four of the five stakeholders—the PBA, PBL, UNAF and the NCAA. Lina, the fifth stakeholder, quit the group.

"Mr. Lina was almost given a freehand by POC to draft the constitution and by-laws," said Romasanta. "At his (to the POC it concerned), [the group has] to comply with the requirements and the timeline stipulated in the MoU."

The Memorandum of Understanding outlined the conditions under which the 90th congress will be lifted.

"The general assembly will not agree to reinstate the BAP," said Romasanta. "But POC is open or ready to a new member, you need two-thirds of the vote. Where BAP was expelled, it was not even [one-]third [in favor]."

The CAS is an international institution that settles sports-related disputes. Based in Lausanne, Switzerland, it is independent of any sports organization composed of 300 arbitrators from 87 countries.

VILORIA

Replica of Elorde belt for Viloria

A GOLDEN REPLICA of the world junior lightweight belt which the legendary boxing champion Gabriel "Flash" Elorde won in 1960 will be awarded to reigning world light flyweight champion Brian Viloria on Saturday during the 6th annual Elorde Boxing Awards Night at the Hotel Sofitel Silida.

Viloria and fighter of the Year Manny Pacquiao are the outstanding honorees in the annual tribute to the country's top fighters and boxing personalities organized by the Elorde clan and Johnny Elorde Management International.

"Viloria will be awarded an exact copy of the golden belt that Flash Elorde wore when he beat Harold Gomes Lol for the world junior lightweight championship 46 years ago at the Araneta Coliseum," said Lito Elorde yesterday at the PSA Forum at the Peninsula Restaurant in Manila.

Elorde knocked out Gomes in the seventh round at elevating to...

HONDA
The Power of Dreams

Resurgent Bulls battle Realtors

SEE BILL AND STA. LUCIA SMART HOPE TO build on recent momentum while Barangay Ginebra and Purefoods eye a rebound in the Don Honorio Ventura-PBA Philippine Cup today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Champions at the Fiesta Cup last conference, the Bulls should off the cobwebs that led to a conference-opening defeat to the San Miguel Beermen and defeated the Alaska Aces with their trademark running attack.

"That loss against San Miguel was a wake-up call for us," said Red Bull coach Siot Gotan. "If we want to be contenders in this conference, we must learn some at their best."

The Realtors also woke up from a short slumber and turned back the Air21 Express to begin their climb out of a 0-2 pit. Dennis Espino and Marlou Aquino were both fired up in that victory, while Aquino continues up his a lack of fire to ardently against Purefoods and Barangay coaches.

"We've been developing a new system and if you noticed, the team is now more inclined to run the breaks than only on defensive play," said Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua. "Actually, we're not really looking to win. I just tell them to improve every game and everything will follow."

Rookie Villanueva, Mick Pennisi and KJ Bell are being eyed to anchor a defense that the team hopes will feed in the guard offensive flow.

"We want to put energy on a consistent manner, defense-wise," said Gotan, whose Bulls are coming off a week's break after beating Alaska. "On the offensive end, we're more comfortable with the up-tempo brand of play."

Gotan added, "That one week break was good for us. We should relish it because my players are already spent after winning the championship."

In contrast, the Gilas will be playing their third game in a week that included a tough Hong Kong Dragonpack loss last June in a two-game Coca-Cola Tipan and the other to the Talk 'N' Text Phone Pals during the league's five overseas games of the season.

Aarby Intemnado was his usual fiery self and hauled the homage Talk 'N Text frontliner with various bellows a sellout crowd of overseas Filipino workers in the former Emirate country.

However, Willie Miller and Jimmy Alapag shot the lights out of the Queen Elizabeth stadium, paving the way for an 89-66 rout of the Giants.

The Kings, on the other hand, never looking to protect a clean slate when they faced the Beermen recently, but instead ran straight into a San Miguel squad that played hard enough to post a 77-59 win that pulled the second favorite to solo second at 2-1.

Jane Navarro

Guidicelli's explosive comeback zaps rivals

GAMBOSA, CANTE—MATTEO GUIDICELLI hailed the memory of his controversial defeat to Michelle Bourgueuer last year with an explosive victory Sunday in the kickoff leg of the 2006 Shell Helix Superkarting Series at the Gamboza Circuit.

Guidicelli, and driver of the Cebu Racing Group color more claim the colors of Bernardino Racing, took the checkered flag in the combined race for the premiere Formula 125 and the Rotax Max Senior classes.

The 15-year-old Bernese Easter of the Year has defied Enrico's David Cloak and Ninth Marlon Ganzinger roads and mall early in the race before pulling away in the 15th lap, where he posted the fastest lap time of 01.222 seconds.

Guidicelli clocked 14 minutes and 39.875 seconds in the 20-lap, 32-kilometer, finishing 1.677 seconds in front of Cloak. Ganzinger settled for third place, 2.727 seconds off the pace.

MATTED Guidicelli uses tire rusty pace against Daniel Cloak (7) and a trio of Blrd drivers, Marlon Ganzinger (12), Ivan Campist (9) and Indy Yildore (3) in Sunday's race at Carmona Circuit Phils.

Sharing the limelight with Guidicelli in the combined race were United Promotions Associates, Chris Magsalin and newcomer Ernest Ian.

Vested, daughter of the multimillion Mike Potenciano, handily topped the Rotax Senior class over Forever-up Santiago Gerard Kim Mendiola.

Carmona, a native of Cebu, became the first winner of the new ROC Series class ever fellow Cebuano Manager Calderon and Ted Peralta.

Magsalin topped the Veterans class over equestrians Santiago Gerard and Ricardo Lee, while Carmona a close race with Xavier Gendrano and last year's Cadet 60 novice champion Vernor John Tuba to claim the Formula 11 plum in the series sponsored by Shell fellis, Dexus Infiltrex Power, Honda Phils., Fantasy Company, Invisimed Ans, Infinity Transport and Yokohama Rear Tires.

Carmona Mayor Dahlia Loyola graced the opening ceremonies together with Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP) chair Manolo Velasquez and Yoshiki Yoshida, vice president of Philippine Auto Components Group Mitsuru Hirata.

Tan nixes Granny Goose offer; Sison to coach Tortillos

By Calvin Cordova
Cebu Daily News

CITING THE SAME REASONS AS **when he first quit the post, former** Granny Goose coach Jun Tan has denied he is making a return stint with the Tortillos in the coming PBL Unity Cup.

The Cebu-based Tan told the Cebu Daily News that he has officially turned down the offer of Granny Goose to return to the squad.

Tan's decision paved the way for former Mandala mentor Robert Sison to take over the Tortillos.

"Much as I want to coach Granny Goose again, my business here [Cebu] would not allow me to do so," said Tan.

Earlier reports that came out in **national newspapers said that Tan** had already accepted his old job.

"My business here is growing and it's not practical for me to leave it," said Tan, who met with the Granny Goose management last week. "That's why I politely beg off to coach Granny Goose again and I'm grateful that the management also understood my situation."

Tan, however, accepted the offer to become the team's consultant.

Sison, who led Mandala to its lone championship in the 2004 Philippine Cup, resigned last month amid a cloud of controversy.

Tan said he will be working together with Sison to help Granny Goose achieve a decent finish in the upcoming conference.

"Robert told me that he would also use the system that I implemented when I was still the coach and it's good because the players would not adjust that much," said Tan.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines
LTO SWEDE WINDSHIELD VALIDATION STICKERS AND PLATE YEAR TAGS FOR 2006

The Land Transportation Office, through the General Funds of (calls 101) Republic of the Philippines, for the amount of Two Million Thousand (₱10,000,000.00) Pesos, per Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for the supply and delivery of **2006 ready accumulated validation stickers and plate year tags** for the use Statistical Head Office and Regional Offices, pursuant to Section 21 of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at this opening.

The Land Transportation Office now invites Bids from Eligible Bidders for the items. The required delivery schedule will be indicated in the approved Contract. A Bidder's Eligibility as eligible Bidder is contained in Section 3 of the Bidding Documents. (TB)

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) Part A (RR) as of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is open/not to Filipino citizen/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outright ownership owned belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act (R.A.) 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents. (TB) The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine compliance/status of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Sub-Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the amount of Php 10,000.00 (TB). Upon the Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Transportation Office will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on March 31, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at the LTO Library, East Avenue, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before April 3, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following forms:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half Percent (1 1/2)
3. Surety bond	One and a half Percent (1 1/2)
4. Foreign government guarantee	Two hundred percent (200%)

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on April 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at LTO Library, East Avenue, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Transportation Office reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, or annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Land Transportation Office
Attn: Jimmy G. Ferrigan — Chairman, BAC
East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 921-4071 — telefax

Roberto S. de Villanueva — OIC, Property Section
Property Section, LTO, East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 925-03-15 — telefax

(Sgd.) ATTY. JIMMY G. FERRIGAN
BAC Chairman

Badminton revamp brewing–again

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE COUNTRY **hosts its first internationally sanctioned tournament,** Philippine badminton is headed for yet another revamp, one which threatens to derail a recuperative program that has already been put in place.

The shakeup, insiders revealed yesterday, threatens to leave nothing untouched, including the post of new national coach Irwin Chan, who authored a roadmap to recovery for a sport that has caught the nation's fancy.

Chan neither confirmed or denied the reports but admitted that a high-ranking official of the Philippine Badminton Association (PBA) has already informed him of the development.

The buzzers tried to contact the PBA but was told in lieu of formal invite to an interview can be arranged with PBA president Ding Ramos or executive vice president Edgardo Inglesias.

A long-time PBA official who once served as the grassroots development chief, Chan is said to be one of the "favorites" to the PBA presidency.

Chan replaced Martin Antonio, who handled the RP team's continental preparations for the 22nd Southeast Asian Games, a stint that led to Chan's ouster.

Chan had already prepared a two-year program which was to start with the selection of the new RP team depending on their performances in the Philippines Open in May.

In the meantime, Basil Geraldo, an outstanding the 3rd with 47 points. Edlene Tenar finished with 23 while veterans Alex Pantin, Valdez amassing third with 14.

Hilary Siddayao topped the youth race over Rodolfo Malangan.

Espiritu outkicks field in Angeles City criterium race

ARMYMAN VICTOR ESPIRITU powered it out in the closing laps to beat Lloyd Reynante and top the third leg in the Philsmith Cycling Search International (UCI) Criterium Race of the Magnolia Ice Pack in Angeles City over the weekend.

Rallying to gain headway in the first two stages, Sophia debuted out the form that once made him an Asian champion, amassing 42 points in the 50-lap race, including 10 sprint points, to top the competition merchandise and 23 under division.

Reynante, racing for GOJO/BIC-Utap, came in second with 39 points while San Leonardo's Bernard Lesmana finished third with 26 in the event organized by Tres Sales and Management Corp. and held in cooperation with SEC by Clark.

Makati 3-cock derby today

LEADING COCKERS and breeders from Pasay, Parañaque, Mandaluyong and Makati will take today in a 3-cock derby set for 10 a.m. at Makati's with 8-Meg Derby Ace as sponsor. The first of 7 fights starts at 6 p.m. in the derby hosted by the BBCI Lipa Group in cooperation with Gaga Fish Inc. and the NFU Sports and Amusement Corp. Last Monday, the Victoria Peak entry of Richard Bautista and Ariel Del Rio, Nicolas Kelly bet sacked up five straight wins to nab the Finals. Eastern Association of Philippines in each derby. Attendance is over than 100 fights are expected on Monday in the John D'made derby at the center. Call 896-3345 or 896-9415.

70 fights up in San Juan

THE SAN JUAN BOOSters Association of the Philippines (SOAP) 5-cock derby gets going today with 70 fights at the San Juan Coliseum sponsored by Sagunan Complex. SOAP Chairman Ong Ching Po (SOAP Cocker of the Year 1998 and Mr. All Tanauan 1975 Finalist) and Rep. Butch Pichay and Rep. Romeo Dyquiangco Pichay) with 15 purse to each. Bill Pitbull, Inclusive, Invitational has already reached the limit by Eleven Tycoon recently, in tournament open with an Up seed at 5:45 in a 5-cocker on March 27.

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TNT couldn't afford to lose

IN HUDDLE

BEBB CUBIN

MIAMI: The Philippine Air Lines Flight 300 from Manila to Hong Kong, where the TNT Tri Tri Pain-brush match was to be staged over the weekend, random thoughts were running through my mind.

I was imagining myself at the shoes of newly appointed Phaser Hilo coach Dennis Pumaren, who I know must be feeling tremendous pressure going into his third game in the PBA Open Canadian Philippine Cup.

Before last Sunday's match, Dennis had four two-straight games (to Ginebra and Alaska), and zero season. There was no secret that the record wouldn't go from bad to worse from 0-2 to 0-3—an unthinkable scenario not only for Dennis but also for TNT governor Nicky Vargas, who had unwisely fanned for the veteran coach inside the PLDT board room.

My thoughts went to Ricky, who must be just as pressured as Dennis to deliver. From what I know, it was Ricky who had recommended Dennis over Chot Reyes after a deep and lengthy deliberation.

At the end of the day, DLSU head honcho Manny V. Pangilinan trusted Ricky's judgment and backed-up Dennis.

In the interim, Ricky granted TNT's new coach blanket authority to do what he deemed best for the team.

Besides the blanket authority to do what he deemed best for the team.

Besides the blanket and minor changes in the system, and accompaniment of the line-up and the coaching staff.

Talk Ti Tini couldn't afford to lose in Hong Kong, aside from the dismal 0-2 record that needed improvement. PLDT Global was sponsoring the PBA on TELE noviz. PLDT Global's good looking president and CEO Al Panlilio, a former cager, had even invited several ranks members from Manila to grace the weekend sporting event.

The media group arrived in Hong Kong Saturday noon and was whisked off to the Riviera Polo Prince Hotel in Kowloon, where they were each presented a copy of the weekend sked prepared by executive secretary Tess de Quintos. Dinner at the classic and exclusive Shoehorn Warfare at 6 p.m. hosted by MVP TNT/Purefoods game the following day, Sunday, at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium, and dinner at 4:00 p.m. at the famous Springbok Restaurant, owned/manned by Ricky Vargas, the PLDT/Smart chief.

A few hours before the Aberdeen dinner, we were informed that our host would not be able to join us, due to a very pressing matter that had kept him in Manila. MVP said he would try to be in Hong Kong for the game.

Although we had looked forward to shooting the breeze with the country's business genius (whose network is currently his. I in terms of revenue), Ricky, G. Atty. Paul Gozon and Dr. Buffy Boyet were their compensated for his absence.

We also enjoyed Chinese dishes which, Al said, was personally chosen by MVP, including pig, steamed eel Gamapa, assorted seafood with asparagus, etc.

An array of wildly-screaming fans—predominantly female—gathered by the entrance of the Queen Elizabeth Stadium when our bus arrived for the game. They thought the vehicle was carrying PBA cagers.

They were not disappointed though, when the other bus arrived, carrying the Purefoods team. It took a while before the Chinese Guests would get past the adoring fans and into the stadium. JPC team manager Abet Pamintuan came in last but he received as does the biggest stars.

Inside the stadium, a Pinoy asked if she could sit beside me. She asked where she was from (as usual) I told her she was once in Hong Kong. She asked me why and I told her I didn't know. She admitted she was a student but was dismayed that she was following basketball closely.

The Pinoy OFW who has been working in the former British territory since 1999, asked which team Asians' big was playing for. She had a lot of questions. I was relieved when the second quarter began. She scolded and let me leave my seats on the invitation of ABC5 exec Winston de la Cruz to get some snacks at a nearby hotel.

The final score of the Hong Kong game may have been lopsided—69-44, in favor of TNT—but the match was truly exciting.

SARAH Macaraeg of Saint Louis University stretches to execute a spike at the La Salle Green Hills sandbar.

Benilde spikers off to hot start

IC BENILDE KICKED OFF ITS TITLE defense of the men's crown on a bright note, ripping San Beda, 25-14, yesterday at the start of the 18th Scottex Beach Volley Championship at the La Salle Green Hills sandbar.

Junley Herrera, half of the tandem that won last year's title in Boracay, had little trouble blasting with new partner Raul Flo de Castro as the pair needed just 15 minutes to bundle out San Beda's Norman Cortez and Ryan Escalilla.

"I'm fine with him, although I feel we need some more adjustments since we haven't really practiced together," said the 20-year-old Herrera, in his third stint in the annual event pioneered by Scottex.

There are pairs are vying in this year's edition of the popular summer grant, 16 each in the men's and women's divisions. Sixteen of them come from Luzon, 12 from the Visayas and eight from Mindanao. The teams are eyeing prizes in the big-dated May 4 to 6.

In other games, Letran topped San Sebastian, 26-26; Philippine Christian U defeated La Salle, 25-17 and 18; Ateneo of Davao beat University of the Cordilleras, 25-20 in the men's side. In the women's side, Adamson topped FEU, 25-16; Ateneo crushed St. Jude College, 25-8; UPC whipped Lyceum 8, 25-10; and University of Baguio ambushed St. Louis University, 25-15.

Amazing Thai rider steals show from Aguilar, NZ ace

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—A YOUTH DEpowered dynast Thaijah of Thailand relegated the whole horsemen the Philippines' top rider Glenn Aguilar of Cebu's Rovers and New Zealand ace Jaime Robinson to a non-finishers Sunday as he raked the 3rd Mayor Edward Hagedorn Cup in the 2006 Motocross Masters of Asia Sunday at the Puerto Princesa International Raceway here.

The youngster in the 20-man international field at 17, Thaijah displayed skills way beyond his years as one reached/negotiate both terrain.

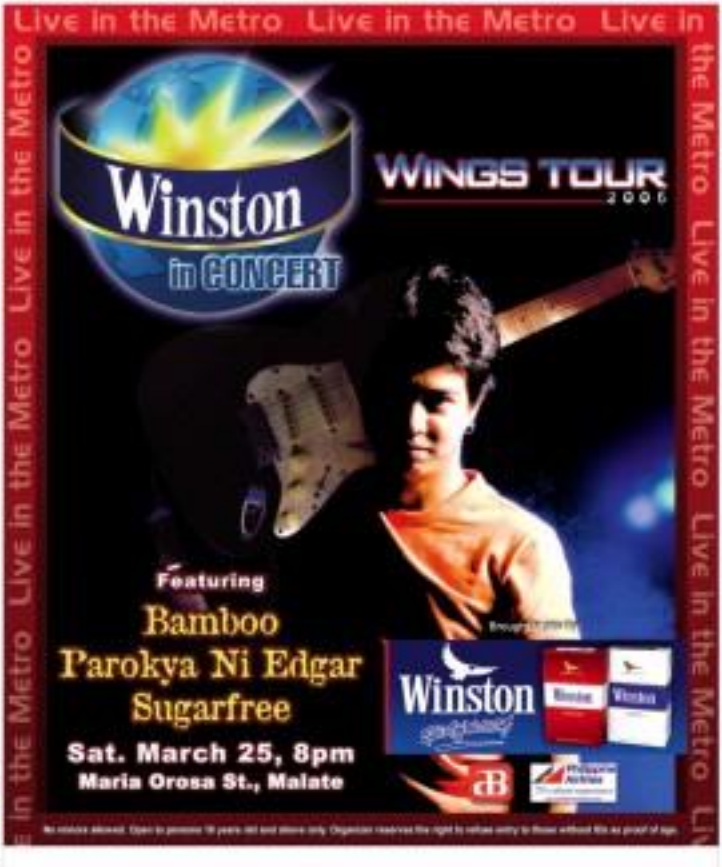
Not even runner-up Jay Harvey of Australia came close in beating Thaijah, who amassed 30 points for his victory.

Indonesian Aep Undang Septiana wound up third with 40 points in both races.

Thaijah, posting the fastest laptime of 1:21.932, wrapped up the race beginning race in 22 minutes and 07.227 seconds, 9.86 seconds ahead of Harvey. He was more explosive in the afternoon which he clocked 24:15.366, pulling away early and claiming the checkered flag seven seconds ahead of Harvey, who earned 44 points.

Aguilar and Robinson, however, struggled for position in both races. Aguilar settled for fourth overall with 26 points. He beat Brady—fourth place—coming in the morning race, while Nolan was rewarded up eighth overall.

PBA's PR. 100 PRINCESS? Hawaiian Blade Jumbo Jack (left) shows how to dribble like during a mini cage clinic at the opening of the Sportsdream Sportsdate at the Ayala of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong recently. The clinic which each entry will also be played by players from Red Bull and the PBA's Crowne Crown.



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BRYANT Scores/stats conv. 12

Kobe helps Lakers pocket 'must-win' game

BOSTON—KOBE BRYANT HAD 43 points, five rebounds and five steals and the Los Angeles Lakers salvaged the finale of a three-game road trip with a 105-97 win over the Boston Celtics in the NBA on Monday.

Bryant shot 16-of-29 and Lamar Odom added 17 points and nine rebounds for the Lakers, who never trailed and pulled ahead for good ahead of Sacramento for seventh place in the Western Conference.

The Lakers avoided falling below .500 for the first time since a loss to Utah on Jan. 3 dropped them to 13-14.

"This was a must win for us," Bryant said. "We played well the entire trip, but it's just that we weren't able to close things out. Tonight was a win that we desperately needed."

Paul Pierce scored 26 and Tony Allen added a season-high 18 points for the Celtics, who have lost four of their seven games behind Philadelphia in the race for the eighth Eastern Conference playoff spot.

The Lakers' first two games of their road trip ended with missed rumored 3-point ers by Bryant. The Lakers lost to New Jersey, 92-95, on Friday and to Cleveland, 96-95, on Sunday.

Bryant scored 16 points in the fourth quarter, including the Lakers' last 11.

"When the game is on the line, they put the ball in my hands," Bryant said. "I've got to do what I've gotta do. I don't care if it's 50 shots, 60 shots, five shots."

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Rasheed Wallace had 26 points and eight rebounds to help Detroit clinch the Central Division title in a 91-80 triumph over Atlanta.

Detroit (53-13) also ruthered its magic number to clinch the Eastern Conference's best record in nine-ten History.

In other games, the LA Clippers topped the Houston Rockets, 99-93, while Minnesota defeated Portland, 110-93. AP

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SHOWCASED by cowbird, Team Japan reunites up to get a first of the championship trophy. AP/EPA

WORLD BASEBALL

Japan smears Cuban repute

SAN DIEGO—ICHIRO SUZUKI and his less-famous Japanese countrymen beat Cuba, 10-6, in the World Baseball Classic final on Monday.

Cuba had won 23 of 24 games in international competition and dominated the globe for decades, but they crashed at the worst possible time against a team which reached the semifinals only after the United States was upset by Mexico.

In the Classic's inaugural final, Japan led, 6-1, Cuba rallied to within one on make it exciting, then Japan ran away for good with four runs in disrupted the ninth and dominated the globe for decades, but they crashed at the worst possible time against a team which reached the semifinals only after the United States was upset by Mexico.

In the Classic's inaugural final, Japan led, 6-1, Cuba rallied to within one on make it exciting, then Japan ran away for good with four runs in disrupted the ninth and dominated the globe for decades, but they crashed at the worst possible time against a team which reached the semifinals only after the United States was upset by Mexico.

When reliever Daisuke Matsuzaka got the final out, he was mobbed near the mound by his teammates. The Japanese then tossed Southern Ok. their manager, into the air twice.

"I'm unbelievably happy," Ichiro said. "To be honest, I never imagined we'd go there. We had a great team, the best, I hope we showed everyone what a great game baseball is."

Two Cuban players posed with Ichiro for a photo.

"I never credited a team for a tournament like this, and never thought the pressure to be so high," Oh said. "Baseball is the best sport. Everyone has to work together. There is nothing more wonderful than that. Japanese players did such a wonderful job and showed that to everyone in the world."

After the winners took a victory lap with a huge Japanese flag, they celebrated in front of their dugout, with a large contingent of countrymen still cheering from the crowd. Once in their clubhouse, they gathered around Oh for a final toast from their manager, then tore into champagne celebrations.

"It's wonderful. That's the only thing I can say," Oyzuka said. AP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, March 23, 2006

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ENTERTAINMENT

Gilda Ernesto G. Velarde

'Don't bench me'

Martin unhappy about diminished role on 'ASAP'

By Marinel R. Cruz

"THERE'S NO MUSIC CAN GO WITH OUR without the show having to be about me. I'm one of those players who can make the three-point shot. If you want me on your team, use me; don't bench me."

Martin Nievera was telling a group of entertainment writers on Tuesday how surprised he was feeling for being one of the "featured artistas" on ABS-CBN's Sunday musicvariety show, "ASAP '06."

Martin, his ex-wife Pops Fernandez, Aiza Seguerra and former Miss Universe Dayanara Torres were the first hosts of the program launched in the early '90s.

The current edition of the show has over 10 hours led by Zsa Zsa Padilla, Gary Valenciano and Rob Ledesma.

"Back then, everything revolved around [the four main hosts]," Martin recalled. "Now, [I'm among] the last-used actors. Tomorrow (Sunday, March 19) I'm singing Adam Sandler's 'Grow Old With You' for the [segment on the] wedding of Claudine [Barretto] and Raymart [Santiago]. I have an album of wedding songs that became a double gold, and I have to sing that?"

Interviewed later, live, backstage, network vice president for Talk, Variety and Reality signed that Martin had committed only six dates for "ASAP" this year ...two in February, three in April and one in May.

Theory

Endroso said the production team hadn't counted on Martin's availability on March 19. "We were told a week earlier. We couldn't just suddenly change the concept of the show, which was for Claudine. We asked Martin to sing Raymart's favorite song."

Martin had a theory: "If you ask ABS-CBN why these things are happening, they'll say, 'It's because Martin is never here.' By throwing me needles ...don't send for me to be available."

"Martin is like an icon for the program," Endroso conceded. "We'd like to have him as often as possible, [so much] even milestone in his career. We know that his division is recently made a big international 'hit.' We're always here to help him promote himself."

Martin stressed that he didn't want out: "I'm not telling the people [running the show] how to do their jobs; I'm offering my services. If you need another male host, I'm your guy."

He added: "Believe it or not, I'm very [self-]effacing. I'm a team player. So you know how many offers I've gotten from the other side? A lot. They're offering me a lot more than what I'm making right now. ABS-CBN has never offered me a contract."

The gathering on Saturday was to announce Martin's fundraising concert on March 29 at the Manila Peninsula in Makati City to benefit 9-month-old Gaia Bianca Fontanilla, who needs a liver transplant.

On your fans online?

I get a lot of feedback from fans. They ask, 'Why did this one get a solo and you didn't?' I tell them, 'Don't worry about it. It's a team effort.' It's because of the fans that I feel this

CONTINUED ON A2-4

MARTIN Nievera says ABS-CBN has never offered him a contract.

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OPENING TODAY

Nanny McPhee

Starring Emma Thompson, Colin Firth, Angela Lansbury

Directed by Kirk Jones

Screenwriter-actress Thompson adapts Christianna Brand's "Nurse Matilda" books, published from 1964 to 1974, and combines the titular heroine as a "Mary Poppins for the Hogwarts generation." A cosmetic nanny (Thompson) tackles the household of a recently widowed father (Firth) and disciplines his unruly children. Michael Phillips of the Chicago Tribune opines that "the enjoyment of roaming [this film] comes best from story contours and non-frets approximating a top-shelf rare hunting a ball." © Gethe described it as a "witty, rollicking little movie that adults will enjoy, too." Wesley Morris of the Boston Globe says Thompson and director Jones "balance the slapstick and lowby-with-darker undertones. At its most enjoyable, [it] feels like 'Mary Poppins' and 'The Sound of Music' [combined]."

North Country

Stars Charlize Theron, Frances McDormand, Sissy Spacek, Sean Bean

Directed by Niki Caro

Nbh. three Oscar first Aurora winners in its cast, this film was bound to tackle a socially relevant issue: sexual harassment in the workplace,

OPENING A2-4

FEEDBACK

Endearing

From: Victoria Francisco (vfrancisco@mmsu-research), New York, New York

Talmagyer watch Natalie Cruz's view that we should not claim Melody and Cheryl Rubio as ours because they're technically Americans, not Filipinos. Don't the Irish claim Christopher the Irishman, Al Pacino and Francis Ford Coppola? If Melody and Cheryl proudly claim Filipino heritage, who are we to deny them that? And what if Filipinos eagerly invite them back to the Philippines? The fuss "pathetic." It is an endearing Filipino quality to become proud of our own.

Pathetic

From: Alfredo Espanola (alfredo@yahoo.com.ph)

By the sound of her name alone, Natalie Cruz is obviously not Caucasian. She is not the example of a Filipino who left her country and completely forgot where she came from. Here to the US, we are always filling up forms—legal, medical, whatever—that ask for ethnicity. If you have a flat nose and Cruz for a last name, would you write "Caucasian"? What's "pathetic" are the likes of Natalie Cruz. For all we know, she's vomiting toilets wherever she is right now.

OPH trivia

From: Mario Mendoza (mario_mendoza2003@yahoo.com), California

Regarding the story on Sergio Mendez, I have a trivia question for you. Which movie/song "OPM" hit in the '70s is plagiarized from a Iranian movie original? It was composed in 1970 by the father of the Iranian movie. You know, I learned from your story on Sergio Mendez. I have several of his records, and as with One Fine Day there is piano "and voice" Bobby Dupree. Yes, I would love to! Would be happy to share the music with anyone, if that's legal. You get my e-mail address; give it away!

Lookalikes

From: Constantine Harper (Dinah@fastmail.com), San Jose, California

I have you noticed that Julius Babao looks like Yao Ming, 7th Sunrise is the younger version of Frederick Pendant and Chito Lagumbay looks like Steven Lopez?

Not Sandara

From: Melanie de Guzman (melchiffon@fastmail.com), Pasay City

I don't agree [with Vera Files] that "...Sandara is too good and unique a talent to be consigned to pop-dolldom." As an eloquent for her line of fine wines and CD sales that we should consider someone like Sandara Park to be a star?

Powerhouse guests for Mark's concert

SHOW TIME

SOME OF THE country's best performers are appearing as special guests in Mark Bautista's first major solo concert, "Stop (Start) Again," on Thursday at the Araneta.

Sarah Geronimo and Jaya Fernandez lead the lineup, which includes Ogie Alcasid, Regine Velasquez and Victor Wood.

Mark is also looking forward to the participation of a superstar-pool, one of his idols in the business. Quoted: "He's a Kapamilya, a singer/actor and [ABS-CBN's] 'IGMP.' I'm so thankful for accepted my invitation."

Call 911-5555.

'Rat Pack' refund

The "Rat Pack" show previously set March 25 at the

Araneta Coliseum has been postponed. Ticket holders can call TicketNet—911-5555 or 374-2222—for refunds and other inquiries.

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PG-13

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2ND WEEK

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NATALIE PORTMAN HUGO WEAVING

V FOR VENDETTA

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LOCAL SHOW BUSINESS IDOL

last year's and fresh good looks, but now talents are often callous and shallow, so we look to more mature artists for genuine depth and substance.

Personally, we find great inspiration in our senior artists who are still productive and creative while their contemporaries have long retired or been sidelined by illness.

Take National Artist Eddie Romero. He's already in his 80s, but he's currently preparing to shoot his first digital feature. Pecking the screenplay for him is young scripting powerhouse Shiela Ocampo.

We like this fusion of mature and new screen artists, and think it augurs well for our film industry.

We're also happy to hear that Eddie's talents and talents Diamond will co-star once more in a new Seiko Films production. Eddie is in his 80s and Gloria is in her 70s, but they're still raring to give their new film everything they've got.

In the field of television, we're impressed to note veteran director Al Quiroz still mugging big projects that mark younger directors would just love to get their hands on.

Al's durable plus points are his having been a dancer, and his memories of the musical and musical-variety modes of production.

The fact that he's also a gifted visual artist helps further explain the striking visuals and artistic quality of his direction.

We're also a fan of Mauro Horacio Nava-Perez, the pioneering pro-

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Nerve

OPENING

From page A23

specifically in the two states. The subdivision is determined according to a court case chronicled in Clare Brigham and Laura Lovely Gandin's book "Class Action: The Story of Lois Jenson and the Landmark Case that Changed Sexual Harassment Law." Mary Sexton of the Austin Chronicle compares it to "Norma Rae" and "Silkwood." "It's emotionally charged and searing stuff... until the film wins third-act shambles," Rob Vaux of the Flipside Movie Emporium thinks it's "skilled film-making standing on a soapbox and pandering to the broadest audience possible." Four Towers complains: "[It's] 'A Triumph' fantasy of female empowerment with soap-opera elements."

Senior artists show the way

big and small across the substance and depth they so surely used.

'16 blocks'

BRUCE Willis is proud of his latest film, "16 Blocks." It's a hit in the States, has gotten some good reviews, and has remobilized him as an action-drama draw.

"16 Blocks" sees Willis as a decorated detective who finds redemption and the power to change in the most unlikely of men, a petty criminal (Mos Def) he's assigned to escort 16 blocks to the courthouse to testify before a grand jury.

During the course of the movie, Willis' character struggles to save the petty hood's life several times. It will, however, it's Mos Def's character who saves the cop's life, giving him back his physical and emotional well-being. Richard Donner directs.

'Undeclassified'

"UNDECLASSIFIED," starring rising actor-rapper-comic Nick Cannon, is an action-packed comedy about upholding the law and disarming the peace. Cannon plays a maverick cop who goes undercover at an elite high school to solve a crime.

Guillermo Cloth as his no-holds-barred style causes the ultimate in high-school anarchy. But the undercover cop eventually uncovers a dangerous ring of criminals, and succumbs a killer.

"Undeclassified" also stars Brandon Jacobson, Shanna Zolman, Kelly Hu and Ghoech Marin.

Today

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7 CO-ED SCANDAL
8 SHE'S THE MAN
9 SHAGGY DOG
10 HOSTEL

ERMITA
1 NORTH COUNTRY
2 SHE'S THE MAN
V FOR VENDETTA
3 GLORY ROAD
4 CO-ED SCANDAL
5 NANNY MCPHEE
6 ULTRAVIOLET
7 GRANDMA'S BOY

METRO EAST
1 SHE'S THE MAN
2 GLORY ROAD
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 NANNY MCPHEE
5 CO-ED SCANDAL
6 GRANDMA'S BOY
7 HOSTEL
8 V FOR VENDETTA

NOVALICHES
1 NORTH COUNTRY
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 HOSTEL
5 GLORY ROAD
6 ULTRAVIOLET

CITISQUARE MALABON
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOSTEL
3 RESERVE
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4 TIGER BLADE
5 DATE MOVIE

ANGELES
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2 CASANOVA
3 16 BLOCKS
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2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 GLORY ROAD
4 THE DARK
5 V FOR VENDETTA
6 HOSTEL

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2 THE DARK
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 MURDER
5 SYRIANA
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'Heremias' wins in Fribourg festival

By Rayzel San Diego Jr.

FILIPINO DIRECTOR LAV Diaz's eight-hour digital film "Heremias" won the Special Jury Prize at the 20th Fribourg International Film Festival held in Switzerland from March 11-18.

According to the festival's website, the honor, which comes with a cash prize of 5,000 Swiss francs (US$3,875), is given to the director "for inventiveness in script-writing and directing, for renewing the cinematographic language and for the unity of formal audacity."

The international jury consisted of Theodorakis film critic Michel Demopoulos of Greece as president and, as members, screenwriter Jose F. Lacaba of the Philippines; film distributor Gerardo D. Ghelli of Belgium; actress Idrissa Diarrar of Burkina Faso; and producer Paloma Rocha of Brazil.

The jury commended Diaz for his "search of a radical and uncompromised cinematic language, with the purpose of safeguarding an original national culture."

The Grand Prize of Le Regard D'Or was awarded to Alanise Mitch "for showing... friendship" of lions.

Other films cited by the jurors were Cheng Yiwo-sung's "Shen You (Blue On Blue)" of Taiwan; Gabriel Velasco's "Los Hijos Invisibles (Invisible Children)" of Mexico; Eric Khoo's "Be With Me," of Singapore; Jocelyne Saab's "Dunia (Ehi Mi Sento On Epoi)," Egypt/Lebanese/France.

The Fribourg fest was established in 1980 as the "Third World Film Festival and aimed to promote dialogue between different cultures."

A MOMENT from the eight-hour-long "Heremias."

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'Do you know how many offers I've gotten from the other side? A lot'

'Don't ...

from page A1 »

wee. They expect something, for instance, a homecoming welcome. It's not as if I'm on the show every weekend. I wish they'd do short homework memos. You watch it, it'll hit it big in the US, they'll be prompting me on MAP.

What are your plans for the year?

On April 15, I'll do another freshman in Los Angeles with MG Arena and other Filipino artists who are in the US now—for the Lyric Interlude victims. In May, I'm touring Europe with Pops... then Las Vegas in July.

How did you get involved in the fundraiser for Gaia?

My sister Tere's son, who goes to the International School, came home one day feeling depressed. He said his teacher, Gaia's father, had a problem. A lot of people ended up donating to help, and it snowballed into a show. The baby could go under the knife on the very day of the performance.

Will you henceforth be concerned about helping people?

You've got to start somewhere. I'm trying to do one a similar climate. Hopefully say same at Ellen some pull.

Once, in Japan, I asked a group, 'If I kissed you on the lips, how much would you give me?' I raised $5,000 for typhoon victims, which I donated it to the ABS-CBN Foundation. By the end of that year, I had donated almost $50,000. But did ABS-CBN know I did that? It's not important. I just want you to see that I am a team player.

Is there anything else you dream of as a performer?

I want to be really big and come back in this country, my homeroom, and do a big show with an orchestra for free. It would be fully produced but I will not charge a cent. That's when you know you're a big star.

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BY MK. JUNIOR

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BY JERRY SCOTT

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BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES ORAKE

HEBDOSCOPES

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

KOKO MACHINE

BY NINO ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHONGCO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUH HILARIBILENG

ROUNDUP

'Jewel' at Market!

The cast of the popular Korean telenovela, "Jewel in the Palace," Hans is marching today with her 22-year-old "Jewel" co-star Janggeun. Their three-day visit is part of the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of Korea-Korea Dialogue Partnership, organized by the Korean Embassy.

Aside from "Closing Shot," they will appear on "Kim Talk," "3-Piso," "Sic" and "Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho."

During their brief stay, they will also visit an orphanage. The best part is a meet-and-greet on at the Play Zones of Market! Market! in Bonifacio Global City tomorrow with the Pinoy followers of the popular series, where Han plays one of the royal cooks. This will be presented by a mini-concert featuring Faith Cuneta 6:30 p.m.

The commemorative activities includes a food festival to be participated in by 30 top of 100 Korean restaurants in Metro Manila. The public is invited to all events.

'V' for box office victory

LOS ANGELES—Audiences were in a rebellious mood, lifting the action tale "V for Vendetta" to the top spot at the weekend box office with a $26.1-million debut.

The Warner Bros. film, which stars Natalie Portman and Hugo Weaving in a story of revolution against a totalitarian British government, bumped off the previous weekend's box-office leaders, "Failure to Launch" and "The Shaggy Dog."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc., official trackers:

1) "V for Vendetta," $26.1M; 2) "Failure to Launch," $15.8M; 3) "The Shaggy Dog," $13.6M; 4) "Ice's-de Mas," $11M; 5) "The Hills Have Eyes," $8.1M; 6) "16 Blocks," $4.7M; 7) "Eight Below," $4.2M; 8) "Tyler Perry's Madea's Family Reunion," $3M; 9) "The Pink Panther," $2.5M; 10) "Romantico," $2M. AP

Possible wedding

CHANGSHU, India—The main thing missing from the much-rumored wedding between Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie were the bride and groom.

Still, officials held out hope that the couple would give a Hollywood ending to the weekend and show up to tie the knot in this Lake Como retreat.

Chief Minister Mayawati Ahluwalia said she had been told Saturday to remain on standby for possible official functions into the evening, that police in the Lake Como area had been placed on alert and that a private security firm had increased security around George Clooney's lavish villa.

Jolie, who normal alongside Pitt in "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," is reporting to India's Ash summer. AP

Touchy Tom

LOS ANGELES—Actor Tom Cruise threatened to boycott promotion of his upcoming Paramount Pictures film unless a store cable TV network pulled a "South Park" series lampooning the Church of Scientology, industry sources said on Friday.

Representatives for Paramount and Cruise, a prominent Scientologist, denied he made any such threats or had anything to do with the Comedy Central network canceling plans to air a repeat of the "South Park" episode titled "Trapped in the Closet," on Wednesday.

Trey Parker and Matt Stone, creators of the crudely animated cartoon hit, issued a quirky statement, filled with references to Scientology and the science-fiction writings of church founder L. Ron Hubbard, suggesting Scientology was behind the scheduling change. Reuters

LOREM Legarda and her hats made of local weaves.

Juliana Zobel, left, brought hats and sweats from Davao.

JENNIFER Sevilla, right, sold colorful wigs.

Scenes from a 'tiangge'

RUPIA GUTIERREZ, organizer: visitors of her games that were suchoosed off: "It was hard work but well worth it."

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Rudy Esperas

BAHAW MO ARUM "ENE bby," Annabelle Parna called to a woman who seemed to be mauling her with an orange gown.

It was one of the unexpected scenes at the Market! Market! Trade Hall on Saturday's "Celebrity Tiangge for Love," organized by Annabelle's daughter Rufa Gutierrez, to raise funds for the victims of the earthquake.

The gown, created by Jose Sevilla Rufla, was sold for P4,000.

Rufa's seasoned mother for moment, this one during the auction: "We announced that the bidding would start at P1,000. Someone shouted, 'P5000!' We had five nights. Pictura pa ang bidding."

Gretchen Barretto auctioned off the gown; Bob Gokonwa donated one. Gary Valenciano gave an Armani jacket. Rufla's rock evening dress was the top seller. Ina Calzado bought it for P7,500.

Quickly running out of goods, Jessica Soho, who shared a booth with Heart Evangelista, promoted, in charge snapshot: banners P150 each for the kitty.

Tarsa Richard and Raymond Gutierrez found their stuff wiped out by 3:45 p.m. Jennifer Sevilla sold colorful wigs. Gina Bonnevie and daughter Ursula Soto set up a fortune teller's booth.

In 10 days, Rufla reported, her group raised P1 million.

"Friends who didn't make it this time around are suggesting a Part 2," Rufla said. "It's hard work, but it's worth it."

HOT COUPLE: Heart Evangelista and Jericho Rosales

EARLIER: Tourists—and crowd drawers—Richard and Lory Gomez

SKETCHY: Barretto holds up one of her fan outfits that were auctioned off.

SOLD! For P1,200 (highest auction earner), Rufla's nude evening dress by Ina Soria, a.k.a. Calzado.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

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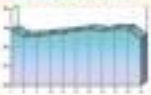

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¥116.00 ▼

As of 5 p.m., March 20, 2006

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per ounce in Hong Kong, March 22, 2006

STOCK MARKET

Zero stock market report on Page B8

WHAT'S INSIDE

Ramon's multiple Angst

Oil firms cut LPG prices

Stocks hit highest level since '99

Shares close 1.04% higher on RP's improving fiscal picture

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

STOCKS YESTERDAY SURGED to its highest level in six-and-a-half years, with share prices closing 1.04 percent higher, on the back of positive economic news, analysts said.

According to traders, foreign investors are seen to be returning to the Philippines after moving to the sidelines over the past few weeks amid continuing efforts to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index finished up 22.40 points or 1.04 percent higher at 2,180.71, after trading between 2,160.31 and 2,186.34.

This is the main index's best finish since Aug. 31, 1999 when it ended at 2,173.02, according to the PSE's research department.

The broader all-shares index gained 10.56 points or 1 percent to 1,2306.02.

Analysts said that a "crucial" resistance or psychological level—pegged at 2,168 to 2,176—was breached in yesterday's trade. They said the breach could trigger another round of buying this week.

"There was a technical breakout, the next target is 2,300," Joseph Benar, president at Regis Equities Inc., said.

"The index will likely encounter resistance

STOCKS B2

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo attends the launch of Dell Philippines's Customer Contact Center at the Mall of Asia Complex in Pasay City. Looking on are Dell Inc. founder Michael Dell (extreme right), Trade Secretary Peter Favila, (second from left) Michael Cavaliere of Dell, and Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

RP seen to have 2M call center workers by 2010

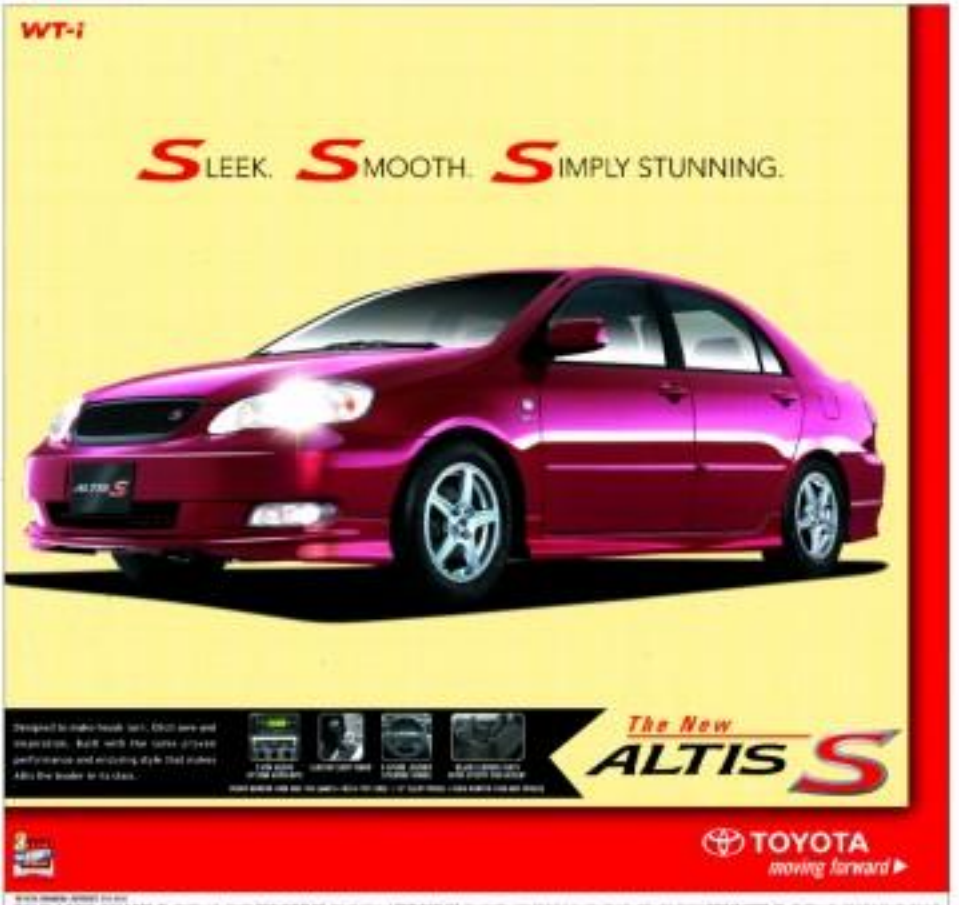
By Doxin L. Lucas and Christina G. Arendain

UP TO TWO MILLION FILIPINOS... more than 2 percent of the country's population—may find themselves working in call center agents by 2010, President Macapagal-Arroyo said on Tuesday.

Her projection represents a 15-fold increase in the number of call center and business process outsourcing (BPO) employees working in the sector. At present, the number of workers would at about 125,000.

Speaking at the launch of the latest Dell contact center in Pasay City, Ms Arroyo said that it is possible to achieve the members because of Filipinos' unique communications skills that help convey not only technical information, but "hospitality" as well.

BP SEEK B2



IPR body adopts 'no settlement' policy

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Strengthening drive against counterfeiting

By Ramon W. Dominguez

AN INTER-AGENCY BODY TASKED TO PROTECT intellectual property rights yesterday said it had adopted a "no settlement" policy on cases involving IPR violations.

The policy is aimed at strengthening the country's drive against counterfeiting.

The anti-piracy committee on IPR, which the Intellectual Property Office is heading, said it was implementing the "draconian measure in addressing IP cases" by no longer allowing out-of-court settlement between parties in cases that were being investigated.

IP Philippines Director General Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. said the measure would give more teeth to enforcement and prosecution efforts and, at the same time, hopefully dissuading of prospective and pending IP cases.

The committee is composed of representatives from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice and the Bureau of Customs, Office of the Court Administrator of the Supreme Court, National Book Development Board and the Optical Media Board.

Cristobal said these agencies agreed to adopt a uniform system in enforcement, investigation and prosecution of IP cases.

He said the DGI had ordered prosecutors to shun settlements between parties in IP cases at the preliminary investigation stage.

The "no settlement" policy is expected to discourage cases of piracy as well as dispel allegations that the government's prosecution of IP cases are weak and slow.

Also, the DGI's anti-piracy unit has decided it would no longer entertain affidavits of desistance from parties whose IP rights have been violated.

Instead, the DGI would push ahead in resolving the cases based on the evidence presented.

"If parties want to settle, they could just do it before the cases or during the trial stage."

Earlier, Cristobal was designated to oversee the government's overall anti-piracy campaign as President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the agencies to pursue and ensure successful cases in court.

At the same time, the committee reported that at least P10 million worth of counterfeit products were seized last January, bringing the government's total haul to P1.15 billion in property seizures since January 2005.

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ROUND-UP

Island growth

EXPORTS FROM THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO grew a more-than 107 percent last year due to heightened demand for its products. Exports figures indicated that traders from the South were unaffected by the downturn that was felt on the national level.

Data from the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDC) showed that export revenues reached $1.48 billion in 2005. The 107 percent export growth of Mindanao was way above the country's 3.9 percent total export growth last year.

Rachael Montenegro, as economist from MEDC, said that the top exports last year included coconut oil, fresh bananas, tailored sea apple, water, pineapples and nickel ores.

Michelle V. Evans

Fuel blend meets BIR standards

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE (BIR) SAID TODAY THAT the use of coco as a fuel blend, the Department of Energy (DOE) revealed as a statistical study by its BIR counterpart, which stated that coco methyl ester (CME) blended diesel was just as good or even better than pure diesel.

Citing the report of a unit of the United States Department of Energy, Philippine officials said various tests and the need on CME, both pure diesel and CME fuels met existing Philippine National Standards for diesel fuel quality.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc., all worked to blend more tests conducted on CME before consenting to sell pre-blended coco biodiesel directly from their pumps.

Abigail L. Ra

Tree-lined power plant

THE STATE-RUN NATIONAL POWER CORP. (NAPOCOR) planted close to 4,000 tree seedlings around its Sabangan Coal-fired Thermal Power Plant (SCFTPP).

According to Ramon Ibe planting of the seedlings under the state-forestry Greening and Grassroots Establishment Project, which involves planting some 10,000 trees in open areas around the power plant.

Ibe said the Power Plant Engineering Project and the establishment of greenbelts would be implemented in all of its generation facilities around the country.

Abigail L. Ra

Ramon's multiple Angst

Stocks hit . . .

From page B1

at the 2,200 psychological level," AB Capital Securities also said in an advisory to clients yesterday.

All sectors were on the green, with value turnover at a hefty P3.5 billion. Unions and heavy 61-to-51 with six stocks unchanged.

Volume was 3.9 billion shares worth P1.499 billion ($29.3 million).

The peso was at 53.087 to the dollar as of mid-day.

Investors are cheering the fact that the government has been able to remain in budget deficit for the first two months of the year as revenues increase while corporate earnings look solid enough to rise.

"The market is buying all the good news," said Hanson Aguilo of Lit Market Securities Inc., although he cautioned that some stocks were up too far, too soon.

"We've seen strong foreign buying in the past sessions," said Nina Triño of Unionbank Securities Inc. "It seems that confidence in the Philippine market has returned."

The national government kept its cash budget shortfall at P48.4 billion for the first two months of this year—16 percent below the target figure—as improved revenue collections offset increased spending because of debt servicing.

The Department of Finance said that in February, where the value-added tax (VAT) rose to 12 percent from 10 percent, the budget deficit amounted to P20 billion, P2.2 billion below than the target ceiling.

The government kept its two-month budget deficit below the programmed ceiling of P48.1 billion despite some overspending in February.

Revenue collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Treasury jumped across the board, helping the government raise P180.9 billion in revenues in January and February, up 21.2 percent from P149.3 billion in the same period last year and exceeding by P9.1 billion the two-month target set at P171.8 billion.

The BIR exceeded its two-month collection target by P5.5 billion, posting P91.2 billion, up 23.8 percent year-on-year.

Also, remittances from overseas Filipino workers surged by 16.5 percent in January to $967.5 million from $787 million a year ago on the back of increasing appetite to invest in local property assets.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone was the main mover, up P32.50 at P1,865.

Top-traded Ayala Corp. rose P5 to P550 while its unit Ayala Land Inc. gained 25 centavos to P11.

Globe Telecom Inc. was up P5 at P900.

Bank of the Philippine Islands fell 50 centavos to P62 on profit-taking after rising to the past sessions.

San Miguel Corp. A shares ended steady at P69.50, while San Miguel Corp. B shares advanced P1.50 to P80.50.

BOB ACOSTA and JOANN MAGLENTE, Inquirer Research

RP seen . . .

From page B1

"We have proven that fiber optics not only transmit data or voice, but also Filipino hospitality," she said. "Because it's not yet possible to download a handshake or e-mail a hug, the next best substitute is a Filipino call center employee."

It is unclear, however, how Ms Arroyo arrived at her estimates, although the government has been trying to encourage job creation in the information and communications technology sector in recent years as a means to offset the rising level of joblessness in the country.

Yesterday, the President attended the opening of the Dell contact center, which has initially hired 300 employees to provide technical support to the company's clients abroad.

During the event, Michael Dell, chair of the world's largest computer manufacturer, announced plans to expand the contact center, first on its full complement of 700 employees, before further adding "1,400 more jobs."

"The plan is to expand [to 1,400 employees], then we'll evaluate it from there," Dell said during a briefing.

The contact center occupies 140,000 square feet of space at the SM Mall of Asia complex at the reclaimed Pasay City reclamation area.

A statement released by Dell said the facility is equipped for the company's most sophisticated training programs, and features "technologically advanced" tools for delivering "superior customer experience."

"This new facility is a result of the direct way we do business, and it's an important investment that demonstrates our commitment to providing customers with the best possible experience whenever they contact Dell," Dell said.

Dell officials declined to reveal the cost of the facility or how much more they plan to invest in it to double its capacity.

The company has 30 other contact centers operating around the world, making its local operations more of a talent premium, especially after Dell announced the previous day plans to hire up to 20,000 employees for its operations in India.

The Pasay site is Dell's second facility in Metro Manila. Last year, the company opened a 17,000-square-foot recruiting and training center in Makati City.

In a related development, Dell said the company expects the local market for personal computers to continue to grow at a fast pace, in line with rising demand for PCs all over the world.

Dell said the company sees local demand for its products growing by 36 percent to 40 percent this year.

Cocktales

Víctor C. Aganón

Cojuangcos, Ang is also feared as the chairman and president of three govt-office hot companies headquartered in the tax-haven shelters of Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, and (ahem...) East Malaysia.

The total does not include the 16 other local and foreign companies where Ang sits on as director and, in one, as vice chairman.

Even during the early Erap days when Cojuangcos regained control of San Miguel 11 years after his abrupt departure, Ang had been heard telling friends and associates about the long working hours in the country's largest food, packing and beverage conglomerate.

Still, the time-conscious did not deter both Cojuangco and Ang from registering the aggressive domestic and foreign acquisitions that have made San Miguel Corp. into a serious, if somewhat lumbering, regional player.

On La Salle's 'pedestal'

THE LA SALLE prayer brigade led by Bro. Armin Luistro indeed had a frank meeting with the La Salle alumni donors ticked off by the "anti-DMV" set-of-the-Tuli campus.

But the outcome of the encounters, although it caused vexations, could not appatently even be diplomatically termed as "fruitful."

"The meeting went very well and ended with a better understanding of [their] respective positions, [with] both sides agreeing to respect each other's views," said former Finance Secretary Jeanne del Rosario Jr.

Del Rosario confirmed that the meeting had indeed taken place in his Pinatubo penthouse office in Rockwell on March 7, not late week as previously reported in this column.

Del Rosario said almost constitutional Bro. Rafael Dozens was in the meeting, but held off giving other names.

According to the grapevine, former Central Bank Gov. Jose Cuisia and former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo were also present, as well as La Salle alumni and Mike Arroyo cronies Benito "Bembol" Araneta, Marcos Reyes, "Pechelo" Sarmiento, new alumni association president Jojotito Gervasio and his predecessor, Jose Tanjuatco.

According to the grapevine, Ocampo later on invited the group to his home for a "Part 2."

Part 2, it turned out, was, we are not kidding, ballroom dancing.

Heard through the grapevine

THE POLICE are now probing their charge against Daisy Sodimat to clear of buying and falsely advertising a "200%" ammonia skin which she acquired for P350 from SM Mall.

As it turns out, the real DOST-dura not come from the 400-kilo, 6'10"+ wide cobra.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@philstar.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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State banks to float bonds overseas

DBP, LBP need funds to comply with stiffer capitalization rules

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED LENDERS Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines are planning to enter the offshore bond market to raise $200 million to $300 million, top officials of these banks said.

The DBP intends to sell in April or May $150 million in hybrid instruments eligible as core or tier 1 capital. This is the first time DBP will venture into the foreign capital market.

Landbank plans to issue $100 million to $150 million worth of bonds for its supplementary or tier 2 capital during the same period. This will be its first attempt to borrow from overseas markets in nine years.

These activities will allow the two government banks, whose capital raising activities are restricted by their respective charters, to meet stiffer requirements under the new International Accounting Standards and Basle 2 capital adequacy framework.

During DBP's appreciation party for its certain wholesale lenders Monday night, DBP president Reynaldo David said US-based global rating agency Standard & Poor's was undertaking a due diligence on the bank in preparation for proposed hybrid bond float.

The planned offering, to be arranged by Barclays and Deutsche Bank, is still awaiting the BSP's and Department of Finance's approval, he said.

Hybrid tier 1 capital instruments have equity-like features that make them acceptable as tier 1 capital. They may be in the form of unsecured subordinated debt or preferred shares with step-up features.

The said to-be-planned domestic bond-raising activity will raise DBP's capital adequacy ratio to 20 percent from 22 percent, David said.

At the meantime, the DBP has approved Landbank's bid to issue up to $150 million in subordinated debt maturing in five years. "They removed the guarantees and we want it that way because we want it as tier 2 capital," Landbank president Nilda Pio said.

The bond issue will raise Landbank's capital adequacy ratio to 17 percent from the current 16.6 percent. It has mandated Deutsche Bank to manage its tier 2 issuance.

Landbank is the country's third biggest bank in terms of assets (P330.43 billion) as of end-2005 while the DBP ranks seventh with assets of P204.6 billion.

Investment firm plans to buy 3.6% of LRWC

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS-REGISTERED investment firm Arlington Investments intends to acquire a 3.6-percent stake in Iloilo-operator Leisure and Resorts World Corp.

Arlington's proposed investment alliance will take for the Hugo operator about 250 million, Leisure and Resorts president Alfredo Abelardo B. Benitez told investors in a briefing Monday.

An investor needs a 9-percent stake to convene and threaten exception any board seat.

Benitez said Leisure and Resorts would issue new shares to Arlington. He is hoping the deal will be closed before the end of this month. This will be Arlington's first investment in the Philippines.

Leisure and Resorts earlier said it was negotiating with a foreign investment holding company with assets in Asia to buy a 3.6-percent stake in the company.

The prospective buyer has assets in Asia, particularly China, Korea, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

The investor is interested to buy 20.3 million shares of Leisure at between P1.39 and 1.44 a share.

The shares under negotiation will come from the unissued portions of the authorized capital stock of Leisure and Resorts.

Leisure and Resorts intends to use the proceeds to fund its expansion plans, as well as those of its subsidiaries.

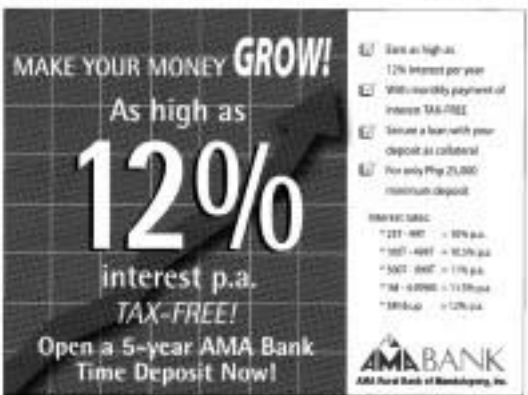
Leisure owns 100 percent of All Leisure Emporium Inc. (popularly known as Bingo Bonanza).

Benitez said the company was planning to roll out 20-30 "bingo boutiques" to high pedestrian traffic locations this year.

Leisure and Resorts may spend P1.25 each on a bingo boutique.

It also holds a 50.75-percent stake in Pryce Gagacom, the country licensee of Internet gaming operations in the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport.

Its consolidated net revenue for 2005 stood at P64.1 million, up from P30.3 million in 2004.



Gov't may increase domestic borrowings

By Michelle V. Ramos

Taking advantage of low interest rates, minimizing exposure to forex risks

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE said the government was considering increasing its domestic borrowings to as much as 65 percent of its total financing requirement for the year if interest rates would remain favorable.

Under the fiscal program for 2004, the government intends to borrow 52 percent of its financing requirements from domestic creditors and secure the remaining 48 percent from foreign lenders.

The 52-percent share of domestic borrowings is the total funding requirement would amount to about P338 billion, while the 48-percent foreign credit translates to about $4 billion.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the programmed borrowing mix of 52:48 could still be adjusted depending on fiscal and external sector developments.

"We don't need to fix the borrowing program [at 52:48]. Local borrowings may account for 60 or 65 percent of total financing requirements if the situation in the domestic front remained favorable," Teves said in Filipino during a televised round-table discussion with President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday.

Christine Sanchez, the treasury's deputy treasurer, said in the same forum that the 91-day Treasury bill rate had recently slid to the 5-percent level from as high as 10 percent.

The decline in the rates of Treasury bills and bonds made the government's domestic borrowings cheaper, creating more room in its right budget for other expenditures other than debt servicing.

Finance officials said interest rates on the Philippines' foreign bond savings had also been declining amid the government's improving fiscal condition.

But Teves said the DOF prefered domestic borrowings over foreign loans which could expose the government to foreign exchange risks.

The finance chief was quick to add, however, that adjusting the government's borrowing mix would not solely be the call of the DOF. He said the policy on the government borrowing schedule would have to be consulted with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which monitors the country's dollar holdings.

While the DOF is eager to borrow more from domestic rather than foreign sources, the BSP does not share the same sentiment because loans foreign borrowings would mean lower gross international reserves (GIR).

GIR measures the liquidity of the country to meet its import requirements and the BSP's ability to protect the peso from speculative attacks.

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Market prospects getting better as investor interest in RP improves

By Doris C. Dumlao

MONTINOLA

THE ASIAN BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE Islands plans to unload as much as ₱1.8 billion worth of bad assets this year.

BPI president Aurelio Montinola III said the bank had planned to unload only ₱1 billion to ₱1 billion worth of non-performing loans and foreclosed real estate assets this year. This might be increased to as much as ₱1.8 billion worth of bad assets in view of improving foreign investor interest in the country.

Montinola said the bank's optimism was not even limited on the prospective extension of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act.

He said many foreign investors were interested in going to the Philippines now.

"Before we were talking to only one or two (potential buyers) at any given time. Now we're talking to three to five groups. I think they're talking to other banks too, and that's good for the country," Montinola said.

Last year, BPI unloaded about ₱6.6 billion in bad assets—₱2.1 billion worth real and properties owned and acquired (repos) and ₱2.5 billion worth of non-performing loans.

He said BPI's total bad assets were estimated at ₱40-₱48 billion, composed of about ₱34 billion worth of repossessed ₱14 billion worth of restructured loans. These figures included bad assets inherited from BPI's latest acquisition, Prudential Bank.

"On BPI side, our NPL ratio is below 5 percent. It increased to 5.6 percent when we included those of Prudential Bank," Montinola said.

Montinola said BPI would also focus on clearing up the bad assets sustained from Prudential Bank.

"It would be nice if we could bring that (NPL ratio) to 4 or even 3.5 percent," he said.

At the same time, BPI is aiming at a higher loan growth this year at 7.8 percent, or much more than the projected loan growth rate of 2.4 percent for the entire banking industry.

He said the 10 percent rise in BPI's outstanding loans in 2005 was partly due to the acquisition of Prudential Bank.

He said it was too early to tell how much profit BPI, which posted a net profit of ₱8.4 billion in 2005, would realize this year.

"Sometimes when the economy improves, the spreads also tighten. We'll just have to see what happens this year," Montinola says.

Gov't to speed up rehab, repair of irrigation systems

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WILL fast track the rehabilitation and repair of the country's national and communal irrigation systems in time for the planting season, Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban said.

Panganiban said the Presidential directive to pump prime the economy listed agriculture as one of the government's priority programs.

He said that out of the ₱9.22 billion required for the irrigation program this year, the bulk or ₱6.6 billion of Budget Management (DBM) had released ₱1.96 billion.

So far, irrigated water systems have been restored in areas covering 21,350 hectares under the National Irrigation Administration's irrigation system rehabilitation and repair program, Panganiban said.

"This program was aimed at irrigating 90,000 hectares of farmlands to achieve the government's rice production target for 2006," Panganiban said the government was focusing on irrigation support because the lack of it was the main reason for the country's failure to meet its rice production targets in the previous years.

According to the NIA, of the total 3.126 million hectares of land planned to be cultivated, only 44.84 percent or 1.402 million hectares have functioning irrigation systems. Some 1.724 million hectares either have defective irrigation systems or were relying primarily on rainwater for their planting activities.

Panganiban said that with the support given by the government to the irrigation program, the agriculture department was expecting to restore irrigated areas to an 68,850 hectares by 2006.

The government has earmarked ₱15 billion for the three-year irrigation rehabilitation program aimed at supporting agriculture to achieve its goal of rice sufficiency by 2009, Panganiban said.

"The demands of the program equipped me with the technical skills I needed for a more responsible position at the same time, its approach allowed me to balance my time between my family and career."

Angie de Silva
Department Head
Real Estate Department
Social Security System
AMBP Graduate

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Plan to stop automatic debt servicing bucked

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS OPposed the plan in Congress to lift the automatic debt appropriation for debt servicing, saying it would affect the Philippines' ability to get credit from the international financial community.

The DOF said in a position paper that getting prior Congressional approval for debt servicing would tempt some legislators to call for debt moratorium, which it said could wreak havoc on the economy.

The DOF cited the case of Argentina, Peru and Russia, that found themselves with even bigger economic problems than what they had before they declared a debt moratorium.

Argentina's unemployment rose rose to 19 percent and its currency depreciated by more than 300 percent in 2001 when it said it could no longer guarantee payments of its foreign obligations, the DOF said.

Peru, on the other hand, was declared an "ineligible borrower" by the International Monetary Fund in 1985 and thus found difficulty accessing foreign credit.

Some Congressmen filed bills to lift the automatic budget allocation for debt servicing on grounds that less money was being spent on vital infrastructure and social projects, such as health and education.

Government data showed that the share of debt servicing in the budget has increased from 30 percent 2000 to as much as 416 percent in 2004.

"The Department respects the concern of the House of Rep-

CLSA expects banks to cut NPLs

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

EQUITY RESEARCH firm CLSA Philippines is optimistic that the bad assets of Philippine banks will further go down, to P200 billion this year, head of research Al Ariel Dy said in a report.

Dy said the banks' nonperforming assets—composed of bad loans and foreclosed assets—fell 20 percent to P250 billion in 2005 from P443 billion in 2004.

Dy attributed the reduction of the banks' bad assets to the following: liquidation of industry loans by an average of 3.6 percent per year since 2001; the sale of bad loans to asset management firms under the special purpose vehicle act, and property prices that have bottomed out are recovering, making these assets more attractive to potential buyers.

Congress, through a bicameral conference committee, has extended the EPF law for another two years adopting the Senate version which limited the nonperforming loans eligible for incentives.

CLSA also expects banks' NPAs to slide to P200 billion by 2007.

Dy said CLSA also remained positive on the prospects of the banking sector.

IT firms urged to seek Aussie partners

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-enabled service firms have been urged to go into partnerships with Australian firms to take advantage of the growing demand for business process outsourcing services in Australia.

Jason Hurwitz, vice president of New South Wales-based Footbooks-Inter.com, said in a statement that the market was growing since surveying was relatively new in Australia.

Business process outsourcing refers to the trend in industrialized countries of getting third-party firms in countries with lower wages to perform non-core functions, such as accounting and customer service, to cut costs.

Hurwitz said activities likely to be outsourced to Philippine companies include financial back-office transactions, IT services and data transcription.

Headquartered in Greenwood, Footbooks is a consulting and brokerage firm that caters to BPO markets in Asia Pacific.

He, however, said that local companies should look for partnerships with Australian counterparts to get a foothold in Australia's BPO market.

"Since Australia is just getting started on the BPO wave and the business culture is different when compared to United States, it would be essential to have excellent partnerships in the local market to build the confidence, connections and opportunities in the first few years," Hurwitz said.

He added that in the next five years, outsourcing firms would expect more than just reducing costs.

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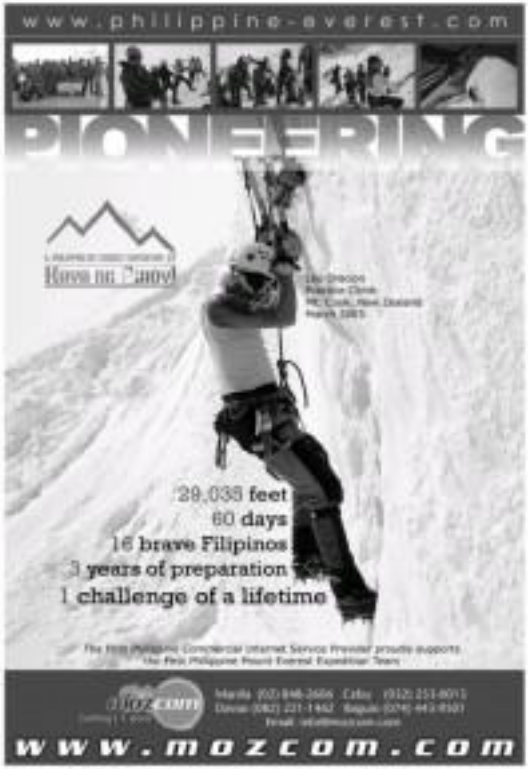

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS
CIP COMPLEX, MINDANAO AVENUE, CEBU CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY**, **Port District Office - Visayas**, through its Bids and Awards Committee - Engineering, Project (BAC/EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the following contract:

a. Name of Contract	**Proposed Port Development Project**
Location	Brgy. Talisay, Lihaguan Island, Southern Leyte
Major Items of Work	1.) Construction of RC Pier (L= 240 m) 2.) Construction of RoRo Ramp (L= 120 m) 3.) Reclamation Area (6.0 x 70.0 m)
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	P13,500,000.00
Source of Funds	PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration	Two Hundred Twenty (220) Calendar Days
Date/Preparation	**Medium A**, Pier, Harbor & Offshore Engineering

Registration Requirements

1.	1 unit	Batch Plant (0.5 T)	Owned
2.	4 units	Bar Cutter	Owned
3.	4 units	Dirt Dagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
4.	4 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
5.	2 units	Bar Bender	Owned
6.	2 units	Welding Machine (150 Amp)	Owned
7.	1 unit	Backhoe (0.75 cu.m.)	Owned/Leased
8.	1 unit	Rock Breaker (1.5 cu.m.)	Owned/Leased
9.	1 unit	Trackmounted Crane (3.50 T)	Owned/Leased
10.	1 unit	Plate Compactor	Owned/Leased
11.	1 unit	Road Roller/Compactor (10.0 T)	Owned/Leased
12.	1 unit	Road Grader (120 hp)	Owned/Leased
13.	1 unit	Crane Barge (DWT 800)	Owned/Leased
14.	1 unit	Drop Hammer (2T)	Owned/Leased
15.	1 unit	Diesel Hammer (3.0 T)	Owned/Leased

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license and registration particulars applicable to the type and cost of the contract to be bid. Joint Venture arrangements are acceptable provided that the prospective JV has complied with the **70%-30% Philippine Ownership/Philippine Equity** participation clause. All contract projects with similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid within the past **Five (5) years**. Immediately preceding the submission of the invitation, with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Statement / duly executed by the authorized representative of the bidder. Failure to submit any of the requirements in a "sealed bid" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid, in accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will be awarded only to the lowest calculated and responsive bidder.

Prospective bidders should undergo a valid PCAB license and registration particulars applicable to the type and cost of the contract to be bid. Joint Venture arrangements are acceptable provided that the prospective JV has complied with the **70%-30% Philippine Ownership/Philippine Equity** participation clause. All contract projects with similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid within the past **Five (5) years**. Immediately preceding the submission of the invitation, with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Statement / duly executed by the authorized representative of the bidder. Failure to submit any of the requirements in a "sealed bid" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid, in accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will be awarded only to the lowest calculated and responsive bidder.

Qualification relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Bid Evaluation criteria, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

	BAC Activities	Schedule
1.	Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	April 03-11, 2006
2.	Issuance of Eligibility Forms	April 06-12, 2006
3.	Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	April 28, 2006

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas, CIP Complex, Sangyup Cemetery Blvd., North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a cc. (Photocopy) of PCAB License and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,500.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the same address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check up from the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P1,500.00** (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier.

The BAC reserves the right to reject any bid, to declare the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) JAMES J. GANTALAO
BAC Chairman

PATROL

3 YEAR 100,000

LPG prices have been reduced four times since January, for a total cut of P5.20 a kilogram or P234.64 a cylinder.

Oil firms cut LPG prices

Reduction in int'l LPG prices cited

By Abigail L. Ho

LESS THAN A WEEK SINCE THE LAST PRICE rollback, oil firms have again slashed prices of their liquefied petroleum gas by P1 a kilogram.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Chevron Philippines Inc. and Total (Philippines) Corp. cut prices by the same level effective 12:01 am today.

Today's reduction brings the prices of Petron's Gasul to between P485 and P493 a cylinder, Shell's FlatGas or Solvergas P495, and P510, and Total's TotalGas at around P482.50.

As with the previous price reductions, the oil firms cited the drop in this month's international contract price for LPG, as well as competitive market forces, as the reasons behind the rollback.

These new suggested retail prices already include the 12-percent value-added tax.

The new retail price for Chevron's Caltex LPG was not available as of press time.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the international contract price of LPG shed almost $100 this month, falling to $536 per metric ton (MT) from an all-time high of $625.50 per MT in February.

In January, international prices soared to $582 a MT from $639 the month before.

Since the start of the year, LPG prices have risen four times, by P5.17 per kilogram or P323.87 per 11-kilogram cylinder.

Prices have risen from reduced four times for a total cut of P5.20 a kilogram or P234.64 a cylinder.

Rules on sale of LPG as car fuel readied

THE JOINT GOVERNMENT OIL INDUSTRY Technical Working Group, a collaboration between the government and the private sector, has completed the guidelines governing the sale of liquefied petroleum gas, chiefly used for cooking, as autogas fuel.

Eastern Petroleum Corp. president and working group member Fernando Martinez said the new autogas standards were completed last week and would soon be included in the Philippine National Standards.

The new rules, Martinez said, were based on the Australian autogas standards.

These were not as stringent, however, to allow more players to participate.

Despite this, he said safety was a prime consideration in drafting the rules.

Under the new rules, oil firms who want to invest in the autogas business need not put up dedicated stations.

They can just place autogas dispensing pumps beside their dispensing gasoline, kerosene and diesel.

A certain distance, however, should be maintained to ensure safety as LPG is highly flammable.

Martinez said he expected the completion of the autogas standards to help jumpstart the industry.

He said that according to initial computations, motorists could slash as much as 25 percent from what they had been paying for motoring to autogas.

The joint Government Oil Industry Technical Working Group is led by the Department of Energy in cooperation with the Department of Trade and Industry's Bureau of Product Standards and the Department of Interior and Local Government's Bureau of Fire Protection.

On the private sector side, participants include members of the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association and the Philippine Petroleum Institute. Abigail L. Ho

LIFESTYLE 24/7

Gilda Chela Bacal-Fortunato
Chief of Correspondents Patt Pastor

Class of 2006

The hard work has paid off. We are celebrating graduation season with special issues dedicated to new graduates. This week, we have essays penned by seniors of class 2006, fashion tips for those special graduation parties, a gift guide, and nuggets of wisdom from celebrities who know that there's a reason education comes before fame in the dictionary. Next week, we'll help you make those all-important after-graduation choices with stories on graduate studies, jumpstarting your career and stepping into the real world. Work on, graduates!

Look lovely, young graduate!

Text by Bianca Cariaga
24/7 Correspondent
Photos by Cito Rivera

ONCE AGAIN, it's the season of vogue and diplomas, and a lot of serious celebratory partying.

Right after the graduation ceremonies, book goods and their family and friends often head out for dinner and drinks. Save yourself the trouble of going home to change clothes, and look for dressy but comfortable clothes that you can wear under your togas.

For girls lucky enough to not have restrictive dress codes in law schools require their graduates to wear extra tame get-dressed, the options are endless.

Try to pick dresses with short sleeves and lightweight fabrics in order to minimize sweating inside the hot, crowded auditoriums. Overly tight fabrics and too much lace will make you itch [you wouldn't want to keep squirming uncomfortably during the long speeches], so keep them in a minimum, too.

Again, comfort is key as

DRESS with rhinestone straps, Vintage by Cinderella

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AHHCHOO!-free

Comedienne Giselle Sanchez imparts helpful tips to AHHCHOO-free days.

AHHCHOO! Comedienne Giselle Sanchez sneezes in excitement and bothersome sneezing due to allergic rhinitis

Giselle Sanchez can't afford bothersome sneezing at Jay Apan! Not being a nights-bought-after voiceover artist now, her schedule is filled with endless television and movie appearances, singing engagements, and stand-up comedy performances. On top of it all, she takes on two more demanding roles—being a wife and a mother.

With so much to deal with for Giselle, allergic rhinitis is no laughing matter.

Allergic rhinitis happens when there is swelling in the nose lining or tissues membrane caused by exposure to allergens such as house dust mites, pollen, animal dander or pollution. Usually made of proteins, allergens are substances that trigger the symptoms of allergic rhinitis such as sneezing, runny or clogged nose and itchy watery red eyes.

Some of Giselle's helpful tips:

Be wary of house dust. House dust mites are very tiny bugs that feed on skin humans shed everyday. When their droppings are inhaled by allergic persons, an allergic reaction can be triggered, leading to symptoms of allergic rhinitis.

Pets must be kept clean and well-groomed. "I have a rottweiler named Prada. Since I discovered I have allergic rhinitis, I have become more conscious to keep him neat and clean."

Decipher allergic rhinitis from the common cold. Giselle narrates: "I didn't know the term allergic rhinitis until I had myself examined by a doctor. At this time I thought

AHHCHOO! Now, Comedienne Giselle Sanchez breezes through her day without keeping interruptions from allergic rhinitis

I just had persistent colds." Giselle would be sneezing regularly, especially upon waking up in the morning. The irregular sneezing was so frequent that Giselle would finish up two boxes of tissue and that's just in one morning. Pissed with allergic rhinitis itself, as Giselle may sneeze 20, 40 or even 50 times a day.

Giselle also has chronic nasal congestion for colds, which supposedly did not relieve her allergic rhinitis symptoms. Giselle shares, "My eyes continued to water and itch. I still had a runny nose, and my throat remained itchy and irritated," she shares. "The only time the symptoms stopped was when I drank an antihistamine—Zyrtec-D 12 Hour Extended-release tab."

Now, Giselle's discomfort has vastly improved, allowing the bonny lass to spread more laughter. AHHCHOO-free!

Zyrtec-D 12 Hour Extended-release tablet
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Two years delayed but well worth it

I don't want to join the graduation march because I don't want to leave college

By Sabreena Devi Nathan
2003 Correspondent

HI EVERYTHING.COM recording for the play. I would have graduated with a college diploma in 2004. By now, I would have a middle job, an ample amount of savings and a vast collection of very very beautiful shoes. Well, some of that happened (except for the shoes part). Believe it or not, my graduating two-years late made everything so much better. In fact, it's the best delay that has ever happened to me.

I have always believed that the choices we make define us and our futures. Transferring to another school was probably the best decision I've ever made in my whole life.

I transferred to the University of the Philippines from my previous life at becoming a pre-school teacher. I decided to pursue my passion for writing and structured a possible post-undergraduate life. So what if I'm going to live in writing and that the Philippines is one of the most dangerous places to be a journalist? I don't care. It's what I love and long to do.

My transfer started a domino effect in my life. The good things started to come to the surface and most windows of opportunities opened. It was also about the time I got accepted as a 2003 contestant. Hell, a division I had always had my eyes on since I was in high school. For the first time ever, everything I could possibly want in but an arm's length away from me.

Being immersed into the UP system was like something. Imagine living in the middle of unbelievable personalities every day, actual people who are making a difference in the lives of Filipinos everyday, activists calling for change and over-occasional rock stars. Being caught by the movers and shakers of today's society leaves one wanting to make something of oneself as well.

I also got the chance to have the most exciting classroom ever. Some were unnerving, to severely smart, some amazing, some just plain insane. There were also plenty of sleepless nights, gazillion of ink and a couple of pounds added. It was a fun, fun ride. I never even turned 21 the years. Finally building up to graduation.

Call me crazy but I don't have plans of joining my batchmates in our graduation in April. I tell people I just don't want to do it or be part of it. Anyway, it's just expensive. But deep down, I think I don't want to join the graduation rites because I don't want my college life to end. To attend the rites means I'm ending everything there.

But not attending the graduation rites doesn't mean I'm not grateful to all the people who have helped me get to where I am right now. I will forever be thankful to my parents, family and Nancy for supporting me in all of my endeavours and believing in me no matter what. To my very first journalism teacher, Mrs. Antonio Corpuz, thank you for introducing me to the world of writing. To all of my friends, classmates and professors at the College of Mass Communication in UP thank you for teaching this soul about writing and everything about life.

Looking back, I can't imagine how I would have turned out had I graduated out from innerliving. I would have just settled for what was in front of me. like many others who climb the silos of mediocrity. People often ask me what I could've been had I chosen practicality over passion. I guess we'll never know.

Of my six-year stay in college, I learned a lot. I have more than enough friends to last me this lifetime and the next. Most of all, I have all the experiences and knowledge I need to face the world head-on. Not too bad for following one's heart, right?

E-mail the author at s o r f a x @ m_ail.com.com

Left behind

If at first we don't succeed, we dust ourselves off and try again

By Jonathan Lanuang
2003 Contributor

WHEN I FIRST GOT THE news that I flunked out of my first college, I was devastated. I couldn't remember any instance in my adolescent life that had made me cry as much as I did that day.

What hurt most? It was totally everything. Going to a new school, one costing my family and I a lot of tradition that I had wanted since practically my life by graduating off my school.

It was only recently that I realized one more thing I wouldn't be seeing and late soon. Graduation.

It feels more than a little strange. While I'm not taking all the books, like people I grew up with are at job interviews, with some actually scared that they're going to end up at home the day after they get their diplomas. A year ago, they were worried about what to get for their girlfriends' birthdays. A year from ago, the school of the future computer-nerd much more important than responses from potential employers, bosses and, indeed.

Being asked "Dude, so tuition to go graduate?" leaves me with a dumb look on my face, since I can't come up with a reply. I do not want to be known as the "Old guy who hasn't graduated yet," but that is ironically what I am.

Some of my new classmates haven't even had their debuts yet, for crying out loud! I got called home and got a million times a day, which doesn't make me feel any better about my age—I'm 23. I've tried lying about my age, but for some reason my beard and moustache seem to cause doubts about my claims of being 17.

On a less shallow note, though, I do consider the considerable amount of time and money spent on subjects which will never be credited and to knowledge I'd never be able to use. Now that I've passed my "phase" (what my friends call that period where even the brightest student gets lazy and burns out), I can't help but feel guilty about wasting so little opportunity.

A little more studying here, a bit more research there and maybe I'd be marching this month, too. But as the saying goes, it's no use crying over spilled milk.

New chapter

Thus begins the latest chapter in my life. Life goes on, right? I'm in a great new school, in a course I absolutely love, I've gotten my confidence back, and am evading harder classes than ever. By check I'm graduating late, but from my perspective, I've gotten time around classes that everyone wishes they had.

So my "old ages," I've learned to look on the bright side of my predicament. If I didn't, I'd probably be insane, depressed, or both. For one thing, like some of my graduating friends have said, my not joining the work force yet is a bright side in itself. I screwed up my first course (or was...okay, so there was a third too, but I didn't screw it up, I just didn't like it). But as I said, I love my new course and I'm moving in the right direction toward my dreams.

On top of that, my experiences may me from making the same mistakes I did as a young teen mad. (Okay fine, I was a geek and always will be.) Oh, but the ladies like us mature guys, don't they?

Seriously, though, thinking about my situation and being a late graduate have only gotten me more focused. While the old me would just accept his fate by fate, the new me has more to the dial longer every minute.

For made myself a promise not to do that ever again and I intend to keep my word. If you have a similar story, why not do the same? Getting a degree beats humming around any day.

Let me end with one more child. What happens to us guys who get left behind? If at first we don't succeed, we dust ourselves off and try again. Story finished, but, more importantly, lesson learned.

"I learned how to learn. To take something that was previously alien and friend it, mix and blend to someone myself in it until [or come out] on it. Also, if you're going to take the time to do something, do it well. Mediocrity is for the weak."
—Anne Montenegro

"Hard time management goes a long way. Especially when there are lots of paperwork to be matured soon."
—Rodolfo Pacales

"Where a new thing I learned in college that I can apply to my life, it is 'there is always a solution to every problem.' You see scientists, therapists, lawyer, multiply 'You just have to it's fill you get the answer.—college algebra."
—Luis Jaluan

"The best thing I learned [is] aside the least out of the box you have with friends because when you're that start working, [not] be completely disfocused."
—Muriel Rodriguez

"Meeting and handling different people."
—Rose Arellano

"I've been thing I've learned is confidence how to leave with those who matter."
—Princess Cadiente

"Tightly packed of success is about letting go," says Rhonda Sims. Don't cut class!"
—NIKA LIM

"I've learned that you don't really have to be a graduate to be successful in life. Persistence can help you reach your goals. Just like Lucie Sec, Kimora and Bill Gates. Seriously, it's not just grades or status. I would really want to study and finish ... and I will. I don't care how old I would be. No one is too old for education. To end the long story short, I have no answer to that question."
—Fahrah Zarael

What's the best thing you've learned in college?

Text and photos
by Nilo-Mark M. Sahlan
2003 Correspondent

THROW THOSE PRECONCEIVED NOtions out the window because whether you like it or not, many sizes 2003 go to college—and learned a thing or two while they were at it.

Whether they graduated with honors or not, completed college or dropped it, here are some golden nuggets of wisdom that school taught your fave celebs.

"Best thing I've learned in college is that rather than spend time doing something you don't enjoy, it's better to go out and experience life first. Discover what it is you really enjoy then go back and study that."
—Bianca Ivarra

"Practical knowledge everything we don't be ashamed to admit you're signs not of something."
—Jill Rodriguez

"The most profound thing I learned during my college years came to me when a classmate of mine, during a recitation, mentioned a motto she applies to her life: 'God never gives you trials He knows you can't handle.' Since then, it has been the credo I live by."
—Rebecca Ebesio

Look lovely, young graduate!

OH MIKKA. Apple green tube dress with scarf, P1,690. Oo Baz. Peach dress, P1,795. Stefi dress Bartender

CHECKERED dress with tube trim, P1,195, Dreamliner

PINK jersey dress, P1,295, Bartender

BLUE twill tube dress, P1,195, Dreamliner

From page B1

pair the dresses with pumps or strappy sandals you can wear the whole day. No sex: wearing those killer stilettos. You'll only end up tripping onstage.

Accessories shouldn't be too loud, so wear simple necklaces and earrings that complement the dignity of the occasion. In other words, that dog collar choker will not do, unless you want to make a major statement as the class rebel.

Clean and fresh

Makeup should also be kept clean and fresh during the ceremony. Smoky eyes and caked on lipstick aren't appropriate. Aside from ruining the look of amazing pose moments and eye shadow if you start crying, the look required for smoky eyes (pale lips and barely there blush) might make you look washed out in your photos.

Start with the basics: a clean base, brightening eye shadow and liner, curled lashes and mascara, blush and lip gloss. Since you won't have too many opportunities to touch up during the ceremony, fix your makeup to make it last through all the photo ops after the commencement activities.

Leave the glitter at home for the ceremony, as you'll just look oily in your photos. A light matte foundation looks more polished and minimizes the need to touch up.

Try Maybelline Dream Matte, a mousse foundation that doesn't look or feel heavy, or like Usmana Deguna Bedoza, a foundation that contains good-for-your-skin deep sea scents. Also, Olivia's wide range of shades (over 8 to match foundation tints will help you avoid the "floating face" look in your photos.

Blink in pastel or neutral shimmer for your eye area (avoid the heavily contoured purple/brown eye makeup, unless you want to be mistaken for your grandma) and don't forget to curl your lashes. Maybelline's Urban Orchid collection has pretty lilac and coral hues in its eye shadow palettes, perfect for a soft, feminine look.

Some graduation is a time for emotional moments, you can either skip the mascara or go with a waterproof one. Awake's roll can't smears is perfect because it doesn't have bristles on its wand (and lets you get as close to the lash line as possible) and

Party-ready graduation looks mean fresh makeup, comfortable frocks and dignified accessories

MIDNIGHT. Bo dill pleated dress with beaded neckline, P1,795, Bartender

Don't stay home this summer.

Check out the TRAVEL AGENCIES classification in the

DPC YELLOW PAGES

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PSBank Home Ideal

By Bianca Consunji
Staff Correspondent

GRADUATION GIFTS, in general, should be for keeps. That's why jewelry is such a popular gift at this time of year. A piece of jewelry lasts forever, and its value often appreciates as the years go by.

However, not everyone appreciates jewelry, so some would much rather have practical things.

Here are some gift options for your new graduate.

Laptop

If he/she doesn't have one yet, now might be the best time to get one. A laptop is perfect for making presentations in their army uniforms once they start working, and it's even better if they're about to enter college, where term papers seem to have no end.

Summer trip

Not many seem to be members of the rat race, the last summer before their entry to the working force at their least time to be wild and carefree. Reward them with a trip to a place they've always wanted to go to—Europe if you have the means, or somewhere budget. Travel is best experienced while young, so allow your fresh graduate to see the world with rose-colored glasses.

Find the best place for your wedding reception.

Check out the HOTELS classification in the

DPC YELLOW PAGES

Scrapbook

This is a gift best given from one graduating friend to another. Compile photos of your favorite moments in school (don't forget to keep copies for yourself!) and arrange them in a scrapbook with other sentimental mementos, such as tickets and dried flowers. Result is a funny note or two, and scribble comments beside the photos to make the scrapbook more enjoyable.

Financial investments

While many young graduates might not appreciate "boring" things such as stocks and other financially related items, these are the gifts that actually matter, compared to the iPod that could get outdated in a few months. It's stunning them of a sound future, after all. Ask financial advisers for help. They can help determine what might be best for your young graduate.

Small practical items

If you're not that close to the graduate, or if you're saving money, get the person a practical item or two. That is especially applicable if he or she is going to dorm or live far away. Dorm stuff like utensils, trash, mattress pads, super remedies and rice cookers may get you a surprised look or two from the recipient, but they'll definitely end up using it. Same class a thousand-studded towels.

Jewelry

Still, nothing beats the appeal of a white's egg blue jewelry box from Tiffany's, as if you're sentimental and if the graduate likes sparkling stuff, then by all means, jewelry's a good pick. Choose something that the recipient will wear, so don't impose your taste on him or her. Graduation is also a good time to pass on family heirlooms, as if you have any antique pieces to hand down, go for it.

Gifts are always given at the discretion of the giver. However, graduation is always a good time to give presents that mean something. Make it unique to something useful or memorable, so chance will be your young graduate.

E-mail the author at bianca.consunji@yahoo.com

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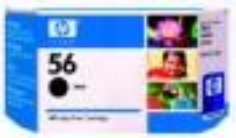

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Look lovely. . .

Press page C2

until we get our wishes you are heavy-duty makeup remover.

Much should brighten your face subtly or again, skip the contouring and sweep on some color on the apples of your cheeks.

Divest Rhale Dolce in Fresh Papaya and Pink Icepoll or are universally flattering colors that make you look like you glow from within.

Finish off your look with lipstick or lipgloss (Maybelline Fruity Jolly and Lancôme Juicy Tubes last long, aren't sticky, and come in great colors). Now you're all set for your graduation, from the ceremony to the party.

E-mail the author at bianca.consunji@yahoo.com

FRESH. clear makeup is the way to go on graduation day.

MAYBELLINE'S Urban Orchid collection includes eye shadow, blush, lipstick and foundation.

LIFESTYLE

Engineered to move

What better way for thrill-seeking enthusiasts to celebrate freedom of movement than to converge at the Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp?

HIP-HOP dancer Reejhone Serrano, garbed in Levi's Engineered jeans

JEANS PIONEER LEVI'S understands your desire to move: effortlessly, freely, and without restrictions.

The result is yet another jeans innovation, a denim pair designed for optimum flexibility and ease. Aptly called Levi's Engineered Jeans, technology and style come together seamlessly to provide utmost freedom of movement this year.

There will be five freedom events: Freestyle Dance Duels with the Levi's Engineered Jeans All-Stars, Freestyle Basketball, Freestyle Football, Free Climbing, and today's latest craze, "Lipping." Led by experts in each field who will mentor camp attendees, the exhibitions promise to be memorable experiences for interested parties.

The Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp will be capped off with a showdown among the best who qualify for the finals of these freestyle events' freestyle dance, freestyle basketball and football. Individual winners can bag P20,000 while group winners get P100,000.

In the thick of all the action will be five hip celebrities who will share their passion and fascination for these sports, imparting expert tips and tricks to Levi's Freedom Campers.

Hip-hop marvel

Hip-hop-and R&B artist Kenneth "Reejhone" Serrano is a marvel to watch on the dance floor. The intensity of his movements is breathtaking. He bends like rubber, twists like a contortionist, and maneuvers with strong-based precision.

Reejhone says, "Dancing isn't just a hobby or pastime for me. Dancing is my life. I work hard to execute each step with perfect timing and artistry. Performing each routine means having a lot of faith and just feeling the beat of the music. Believe that you can do anything! And if you don't enjoy it, you're never going to be good at it."

Reejhone began grooving at age 14, while growing up in Toronto, Canada. Back in the Philippines, he joined the All Stars, a troop of hip-hop enthusiasts all three placed sixth in the last World Hip-Hop Championships. The Levi's Engineered Jeans All Stars will again compete in the upcoming World Hip-Hop Championships in Los Angeles this year.

Zip-ehh

Sharing Reejhone's power and fluidity in movement is ripping aficionado Lorraine Lapus.

INQUIRER.CC

LAYOUT of the forthcoming Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp at the ACTIVITY Center in Market! Market!

HIP-HOP Annie Bonjoc Serrano

FREESTYLE basketball aficionado Rose Acosta

WALL climber Jenna Lopez

FREESTYLE basketball enthusiast Sedrick Manzanedo

ZIPPING expert Carmina Lopez

Engineered...

From page B1

"Jumping was inspired by the Maori tribe of New Zealand," says Lorraine. "They have rebirth ceremonies and they jump off a tree." The tribe would vocalize and flung themselves with the aid of a rope to ease their reactions and for the women to enchant a partner.

Lorraine uses a pair of rope, pieces of string with a little bit of weight combined with bright splashes of color. She opens it around, for a routine that showcases her focus and perfect hand-and-eye coordination.

"Everyone can learn jogging with ease. Plus, there's no limit on[illegible] I can on my most comfortable Levi's Engineered jeans, and I'm good to go!"

Athlete on the rise

For the ultra-athletic Jenna Lopez, climbing every mountain is not just a cliché, but a way of life.

"To be honest, I'm afraid of heights. I'm claustrophobic as well," she says. Conquering those fears was Jenna's main motivation for getting into Free Climbing. Now, aside from climbing, Jenna has also engaged in wreck and cave diving, ski diving, and bungee jumping.

Since she started climbing in 1995, Jenna has conquered heights everywhere, scaling rock faces in Montalban, Rizal, all the way to Sumatar Rock in California.

"Extreme sports entails a lot of courage. It means, a necessary one to push over limits," says Jenna, modest as a 9-year-old boy and year-old twin girls, and wife to her equally athletic husband, Ernie Lopez.

Goal!

Paintball is arguably the most popular sport in the world, and Jhoe Janssen is one of its staunchest supporters, ever since he made his first kick-off as a third grader at

Back with a new beat

The new collection combines street elements with the signature ergonomic features of the Levi's Engineered Jeans

THE MUCH-CELEBRATED Levi's Engineered Jeans collection is making a comeback.

Inspired by the active lifestyle and passionate self-expression of youth in sports, dance, music and sports, the new collection combines street elements with the signature ergonomic features of the new Levi's Engineered Jeans.

"We have created the new Levi's Engineered Jeans collection for the youth with the attitude to move and the attitude to groove. Influenced by contemporary street culture and the fabulous hip hop movement, the latest Engineered Jeans showcase the Levi's Engineered Jeans' distinctive ergonomic features with a touch of sports inspired by colors, fits, and trendy appliqués for the boys against steel and for the girls of the evening," says Levi's Brand Product Marketing Director.

The design elements in Engineered Jeans include the signature "mobility" side seams for maximum freedom in movement. Hints of black stretch fabric have been inserted into the inside front the hips and knees to create gathers for more greater comfort, movement and individual fit.

Inspired by athletic track pants, a textured Levi's Engineered Jeans jacquard runs down along the fabric and outside of the waistband. Both panelled hem tabs have been logoed, diagonal reinforcement for added stress, and the iconic Levi's women is printed on with black silicon ink.

The "technology" hip tapes and all Levi's Engineered Jeans is prominently imprinted on the inside waistband, left hip pocket and front pocket rivet.

Men's denim are modified and fashioning the contours of the body for an overall sexy appeal. Levi's designers have created an array of separates in new jeans, the iconic

CATCH: Vista Lee's Engineered Jeans Freedom Campus April 1-3.

College de San Agustin.

And with football's latest incarnation—freestyle football—Peter is confident the sport will be attracting more fans. "Freestyle football started in Brazil and is similar to dancing with the ball," he explains. "It's all about being creative and handling the ball with flair."

Unlike regular football, freestyle football can be played on the streets, with each team having three players each. Ten-foot-wide metre at goal posts. There are no rules, no referees—just friendly competition and heart-pumping fun. Freestyle football is best played with nimble tricksters, hip-hop beats, or any kind of music that gets a person's creative juices flowing.

One of Peter's favorite tricks is the Cross Over, in this maneuver, Peter kicks the ball in the air with his right foot. After his left leg crosses over the airborne ball, his right foot tries to kick the ball again before it hits the ground. Peter also enjoys the Back Trap, where he loses forward, bounces the ball in the back of his neck, and tries to take of his duty without losing control of the ball.

The sport does not inspire aesthetics. In fact, Levi's Engineered Jeans is Peter's preferred freestyle football gear. "Just like the sport, Levi's Engineered Jeans is hip and is designed for active action."

Street ball

Ferdinand "Freddy" Manotoc is a member of the Fighting, the first official street basketball team in the Philippines.

"It's not your conventional basketball," he points out. Street basketball strips the sport down to basics. "It's basketball without rules-ring memories."

Freddy and his 11-man crew incorporate every move imaginable to their routine. Think reckless Globetrotters, Pinoy-style. "All the cute and impish elements are right here," he says.

Coach Freddy do some amazing moves like the Milk Shake, a move done by effortlessly dribbling the ball under the left and right leg, and the sticky Praying Mantis, wherein the ball is held down the front. The player proceeds to do an overhead pass but the ball actually runs down his back. Just when it does, he lifts one leg off the ground and catches the ball in between the foot and the back of the leg!

Get a chance to see more pair of Levi's Engineered Jeans for every minimum purchase of P3,000.00 in select Levi's stores.

THE LEVI'S Engineered Jeans bus began with a campus tour that visited Assumption College, Ciavet, Don Bosco Makati, San Sebastian, St. Francis School and more.

Come one, come all!

Zip, dribble, juggle, climb and dance and get a go on what freedom is all about in the Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp

FREEDOM, AS THE DICTIONARY defines it, is the state in which somebody is able to act and live as he or she chooses to, without being subject to any undue restraints and restrictions.

"That's pretty much how you'll feel when you put on a pair of Levi's Engineered Jeans. If you have a young and active lifestyle, Levi's Engineered Jeans provides the kind of freedom that simply lets you be yourself," says Levi's brand leader Bonnie Celestial.

Inspired by the shape of the human body (the pair of pants is ergonomically designed to follow the body's contours), with an angled hem, relaxed side seams for better movement and lower back pockets for easy access. What it all comes down to is a denimwear that puts premium on style, comfort and, above all else, freedom of movement.

It's exactly the kind of freedom of movement Chad you can learn and experience in the upcoming Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp. Zip, dribble, juggle, climb and dance and get a go on what freedom is all about in this two-day jamboree, which is open to all young men and women from ages 15-25.

Levi's consumer marketing manager Michelle Bernstein says, "With such exciting and competitive activities like Freestyle Basketball, Freestyle Football, Zipping, Freestyle Dancing and Free Climbing, the Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp promises to live exhilaration of freedom for today's vibrant youth. Levi's has always been known to present exciting activities that the youth can enjoy, and since it's Levi's, of course, we do it in style."

Join the Freedom Camp for an experience unlike any other. Call the Levi's Engineered Jeans Freedom Camp hotline at 8945455, Monday-Friday, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Visit www.levi.com.